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STREET SPIRIT

Volume 4, No 10 October, 1998

JUSTICE NEWS & HOMELESS BLUES IN THE BAY AREA

Activists Overcome Banishment Decree in Isla Vista

Editor's Note: Homeless people won a small but significant moral victory in mid-September in Isla Vista, an area of Santa Barbara. The Isla Vista Parks Department attempted to impose a harsh "three infractions and you're out" ban on street people in public parks. The proposed banishment, which could have set a dangerous precedent for other California cities, was defeated by public opposition and a large turnout of homeless people who denounced the inhumanity of the ban at a Parks Board meeting.

Although the Parks Board backed off from this repressive policy, it recommended that the District Attorney ban persons for committing offenses to public safety; this would not, however, banish people for such infractions as lodging or sleeping in parks. Peter Marin, a Santa Barbara writer and activist on homeless issues for many years, accompanied the homeless delegation to the Parks Board meeting to protest the banishment, and authored this appeal to the citizens of Santa Barbara.

by Peter Marin

Last week, spread across the pages of the *Santa Barbara News-Press,* and then gleefully welcomed in an editorial, was the news that the Parks and Recreation Department in Isla Vista had devised a new and Draconian scheme — horrific in scope, odious in intent — for dealing with homeless behavior and for banishing the homeless, in certain circumstances, *for life,* from public parks — one of the few places the homeless are comfortable.

The proposed policy was described in the *News-Press* editorial as both sensible and necessary: a reasonable response to unreasonable behavior.

But is this the case? A close look at the regulations reveals them to be excessive and cruel, and to take our civic war against the homeless to a level of unfairness that has not existed before.

The proposed new policy is reportedly based on California's "three-strike" law and also on a law devised in Oxnard to deal with the behavior of a violent surfer who repeatedly bullied and terrorized others on the beach. Citations and arrests did nothing to curb the surfer's behavior, so authorities hit upon the stratagem of drafting a law that would punish repeated violations with banishment from the beach; violation of the ban would result in a lengthy jail term, one that would exceed in length the penalty for any particular act that had led to the ban in the first place.

Inspired by this model, the Isla Vista authorities invented a new set of laws applicable to behavior in the parks. Disturbed by drunken behavior in the parks and by a certain, but unspecified,

See **Isla Vista Banishment** *page 15*



Art by Christa Occhiogrosso

In the end, what makes a town beautiful is not the tourist hotels or pretty malls; it is the moral quality of its laws and the justice of its citizens and magistrates. In those terms, Santa Barbara gets uglier every day.

Bulldozing Low-Cost Housing in Beach Flats

Santa Cruz plans demolition and evictions to expand the Boardwalk

by Becky Johnson

The seaside city of Santa Cruz beckons to tourists by offering fun in the sun on the beach, roller coaster rides, and arcade games to amuse and entertain. Next to the nearly 100-year-old amusement park is the Beach Flats neighborhood, where 344 homes sit in the shadow of the Seaside Company, which owns and manages the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.

The Seaside Company, a major economic power in Santa Cruz, is planning an ambitious expansion that will severely encroach on the homes of the Beach Flats neighborhood. Many of these homes belong to working-class families or lower-income residents. The neighborhood is said to have the highest density population in Santa Cruz, and the highest percentage of Latinos in residence.

For the last six years, the word on the street has been to get ready for the bulldozers. The whole beach area is set to be "redeveloped." Santa Cruz, like cities across the nation, has chosen to spend millions in public funds to upgrade business and residential areas to "fight blight" and "ensure prosperity." Currently in the planning stages, and with $500,000 already spent on consultants (some say the number is actually three times that high), the Beach area/South of Laurel (B/SOL) plan is now being pushed before the Santa Cruz City Council to adopt.



Children play in the yard of their Beach Flats home, now targeted for demolition. Many poor and working families are threatened with eviction. Jane Baer photo

$8.4 MILLION TO CITY'S RICHEST MAN

Phase 1A of the Beach Area Redevelopment plan calls for the realignment of 3rd Street in Santa Cruz, initially displacing 23 housed families. It will cost an estimated $3.4 million of public funds to purchase property rights, demolish homes, and build basic infrastructure such as sewers, water, street lights, sidewalks and streets. It would not provide any replacement housing.

The sole purpose of the realignment project is to allow the Boardwalk to

See **Bulldozers at Beach Flats** *page 16*

WHY STREET PEOPLE PICK CODY'S

by Claire J. Baker

They too are
cornered,
booked,
judged for their cover;
ruffle-edged;
pages smudged;
picked up/let down;
remaindered;
bagged &
back out to telegraph

on Telegraph.

PROTECTIVE CUSTODY

(U.N. Plaza)

by Nancy Warder

they built a fence around the grass
so nobody could sit there
or, heaven forbid,
sleep there
when people complained
they said
they were saving open space
for the public
by fencing it in

Didn't I hear something like this before?
Didn't we burn down some villages in order to save them?

Oakland Tenants Union Takes on the City's Landlords

"We want to have the city spend redevelopment money for affordable housing. The city government has millions and millions of dollars that they oftentimes waste. Eleven million dollars to an ice-skating rink, for instance."

— Tenant activist Larry Shoup

Story and photo by Lydia Gans

Renters in Oakland welcomed the formation of a new Oakland Tenants Union (OTU) earlier this year — and should be joining it in droves. Tenants make up about 60% of Oakland's population; that's over 220,000 people, and they have very little power against abuses by the city's landlords. Oakland's rent ordinance is weak and riddled with exemptions; and, as limited as it is, few people even know that it exists and what little protection it offers.

Larry Shoup, one of the organizers of the OTU, points out some of the weaknesses of the ordinance. "It allows automatic three percent rent increases," he said, "but there's very little publicity about even the limited ordinance. People don't even know that the landlord is supposed to limit their rent increases to three percent, so sometimes the landlord tries to get away with a lot more than that."

The law does allow tenants to protest exorbitant rent increases; but the protest has to be initiated within 30 days, after which tenants lose their right to appeal. Furthermore, there is no eviction protection for tenants and no vacancy control. So when an apartment becomes vacant, landlords can charge whatever they want.

James Vann, another OTU organizer, explains what this means: "There's no way to find out whether a tenant who moves was evicted, which means that the landlord shouldn't raise the rent more than six percent over what the previous tenant paid, or whether the tenant moved voluntarily, in which case the rent ordinance says that the landlord can raise the rent to whatever they want."



Organizing to strengthen tenants' rights, Larry Shoup (left), Andrew Wolff, Leslie Dinkin, and Darwin Fishman pass out leaflets on Oakland's Grand Avenue.

Clearly, these are weaknesses in the ordinance that need to be rectified. As limited as the provisions of the rent ordinance are for those who are covered by it, another problem is that it allows all sorts of exemptions. For example, all new units are exempt — and "new units" are defined as those built after 1982! It's a mighty strange system that considers a 16-year-old dwelling to be "new." The ordinance also exempts SROs, those single room occupancy "hotels" which provide generally substandard shelter for many poor people.

Under the ordinance, Oakland has an official Rent Board which has dual functions. Larry Shoup, a member of the board, explains that it "arbitrates between tenants and landlords in accordance with the ordinance, so it's like a judicial body." In its other function, he pointed out, "it can be an advocacy body in the sense of recommending changes in the rent ordinance" to the Oakland City Council. Shoup is considered a "neutral" member of the board because he is a homeowner and therefore has no financial interest in the issues that come before the board.

It was after he became a member of the Rent Board (appointed by the mayor and approved by the council) that Shoup became involved in organizing the tenants union. He saw that, although the majority of people in Oakland are renters, landlords have far more power and influence.

"The landlords have lots of money and can hire lots of staff and lots of power with the city government because they provide all kinds of campaign contributions to city officials," Shoup said. "You can see that when you look at their statements. We want to establish justice for the tenants and organizing people is the only way to do it."

The OTU needs to organize around a number of issues. One of the most pressing is to bring proposals to strengthen the rent ordinance to the Oakland City Council via the Rent Board. But it is difficult to curb the landlords' power when there is less and less affordable housing in Oakland to satisfy the demand.

James Vann provides some numbers: "In the last five years there's probably been less than a thousand new rental units built in Oakland. The only units that are built are built by nonprofit development corporations. Those generally do tend to be affordable but it's a very long process to get financing arranged so we're well behind what the demand is."

At the same time there is a housing crunch in San Francisco and other parts of the Bay Area so more people are coming to Oakland who are able to pay more.

Vann says, "The typical working-class family in Oakland makes about $28,000 a year per household. That supports about $650 a month in rent. The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment is now $850 and going up fast."

More creative solutions are called for. Shoup says, "We want to have the city spend redevelopment money for affordable housing. The city government has large amounts of money, millions and millions of dollars, that they oftentimes waste. Eleven million dollars to an ice-skating rink, for instance."

Other proposals include a city-backed loan program to help tenants form cooperatives to purchase their own buildings. But to make anything happen, renters have to make themselves heard in the mayor's office and in City Hall. Shoup declares, "We want to put pressure on them with a mass movement."

But at the moment, a mass movement

See **Oakland Tenants Union** *page 15*

Saint James Park Under Siege Again

by Lennox Sweeney

On Saturday, September 6, various units of the San Jose Police Department spent the day in Saint James Park, enforcing the *law*, all the laws they are aware of, against the people present in the park. When asked why they are concentrating their resources on the park, the police respond with descriptions of drug activities and of people who are so intimidating that their presence denies the use of the park to others.

The police actions I observed during my short stay on Saturday afternoon included: police in cars, on bicycles, and on horseback moving through the park, and circling people and groups sitting on the grass; two kids ticketed for skateboarding (a wholesome activity outlawed in the campaign to criminalize youth), a man ticketed for selling ice cream without the required county vendor-ID card; and a man handcuffed and arrested for a warrant resulting from a failure-to-appear on a drinking-in-public charge.

Other police actions reported include:

Ticketing of the poorest of the homeless for using borrowed shopping carts to transport their worldly goods, keeping them in sight so they won't get stolen. Some people were ticketed for carts that they were not using; many were told that they had to leave the park after they were ticketed and their carts taken.

The registration of all bicycles in the possession of people who appear poor was checked. People whose bicycles were not registered were told to leave the park. No stolen bicycles were found, but many poor people were driven out of the park.

The police horse patrol said that they took one action based on a citizen complaint of harassment and intimidation. The police, as usual, are randomly hitting the easiest targets, and having minimal effect on the very few people whose activities really do detract from the value of the park as a resource for the whole community. They fine the poorest of the poor, herd the homeless to "somewhere else," and leave the most offensive people to provide an ongoing excuse for an ever-increasing police presence.

Those who are still trying to climb out of homelessness and extreme poverty can even less afford the random batterings of the legal establishment. A small fine, a car impoundment, or a short jail term at the wrong time can destroy a year of hard work and a lifetime of hope.

The success of this cleansing campaign was evident the next day. The appearance of two bicycle cops around 10 a.m. was enough to cause half the people to leave the park. The poor cannot afford to pay the fines so freely laid upon them by the City of San Jose. Many are uncomfortable begging the courts for mercy, and just let their fines and the resulting warrants accumulate until they are thrown in jail for a few months.

Those who are still trying to climb out of homelessness and extreme poverty can even less afford the random batterings of the legal establishment. They need every effort and every penny to work their way through the complex maze of acquiring wardrobe, personal hygiene facilities, transportation, job, and housing deposit money. A small fine, a car impoundment, or a short jail term at the wrong time can destroy a year of hard work and a lifetime of hope.

Most of the police are not working to destroy lives. They are just doing their jobs — making downtown San Jose even more profitable for the rich speculators and developers.

For more information, contact: Lennox Sweeney, 1398 Miller Ave., San Jose, CA 95129. Phone: 408-257-9424; E-mail: lummox@best.com

Currently, San Jose Food Not Bombs is organizing for October 22nd, a national day of protest of police brutality. So far what has been planned is a carpool meeting at the Tamien Lightrail Station at 12 noon on October 22.

Salinas Judge Upholds Civil Rights of the Poor

by Robert Norse

Poor people in Salinas, the right to free speech, and California's conscience won an unexpected victory in the court of Municipal Judge Albert H. Maldonado on August 27. Maldonado struck down virtually all of the "aggressive solicitation" law, which targets homeless people and poor people (many of whom are Latino) in Salinas, an agricultural center of over 100,000, 70 miles south of San Francisco.

Maldonado threw out all of Ordinance 2324 except the sections banning panhandling from people in vehicles. In a move that strongly encouraged homeless advocates, the judge ruled that the law's ban on begging on private property, even without the permission of the owner, was also unconstitutional.

In May, police arrested Kip Louis Klein for panhandling inside the Cathay House Restaurant after permission was denied. Klein, facing severe penalties of up to six months in jail and/or $1000 fine, was represented by Public Defender Jan Lundberg, who successfully argued that the Salinas City Council's anti-panhandling law was unconstitutional on its face.

In March, 1998, with only Juan Oliveras dissenting, the business-beholden Salinas City Council criminal-

See **Salinas Ban Overturned** *page three*

S.F. Officials Cater to the Rich by Betraying the Poor

Mayor Brown and the S.F. Supervisors sell out tenants and the homeless three times in a single month

San Francisco officials sided with landlords against tenants, and with merchants against homeless people. And their negligence enabled the Presidio Trust to flout the results of the June election.

Editorial by Terry Messman

San Francisco is struggling with staggering rent increases, rising homelessness, and one of the worst shortfalls of low-income housing in the country. So what leadership have Mayor Willie Brown and the S.F. Board of Supervisors taken on these pressing issues this past month?

They sold out renters by voting to let landlords pass through the cost of $300 million in bond issues to tenants who already are paying some of the most exorbitant rents in the nation. They sided with merchants against homeless people in a scheme to turn an ever-larger area of downtown San Francisco into a "homeless-free zone." And they stood mutely by while the Presidio Trust defied the results of last June's election by moving university students into Presidio housing while locking the poor out.

On September 28, the S.F. Board of Supervisors, showing the extent to which they have become mere pawns of Mayor Brown, cast an ignominious vote to let landlords pass through to tenants the costs for $300 million in bond issues approved by voters from 1996 to 1998.

Brown conspired with landlords to concoct this corrupt deal so they could stick their already hard-pressed tenants with higher rents to pay the costs of voter-approved bonds for affordable housing, public schools, and the zoo.

It is not surprising that San Francisco's avaricious landlords would do everything within their considerable power to bail out of their responsibilities to pay for civic improvements; but it is appalling that a liberal mayor and a mostly liberal group of supervisors would so brazenly sell out the city's renters. Only Tom Ammiano was principled and independent enough to defy the landlord lobby and vote against this absolutely rotten rip-off that tenants will pay for in higher rents for years to come.

CREATING A HOMELESS-FREE ZONE

Earlier in September, Supervisor Amos Brown abandoned the human rights of homeless people by working with merchants to extend camping bans from Civic Center to United Nations Plaza and other downtown areas. Supervisor Brown and the merchants covered up their scheme with the window-dressing of vaguely worded promises to increase homeless services, but their plan is one more cruel assault in an ongoing barrage of blows unleashed by Mayor Brown's massive police attack on encampments in Golden Gate Park last autumn and winter.



Religious Witness holds a rally at the Presidio to demand homes for the poor.

Homeless people have been running the gauntlet of police persecution and public vilification ever since the Golden Gate raids. Just as homeless advocates warned, those displaced from Golden Gate Park were forced to migrate to other neighborhoods. In response, groups of merchants began scapegoating street people in the Haight Ashbury and Castro districts; it is chilling to see campaigns of intolerance break out in neighborhoods that have long been associated with tolerance and respect for civil rights.

But, after all, merchants routinely place profits before people. It is far more disgraceful to see San Francisco's public officials fall in lockstep with private businesses and champion this climate of hostility by promoting a plan to drive homeless people out of public places. It is sad beyond words to witness Supervisor Brown take part in a plan to roust homeless people out of United Nations Plaza.

Many solemn ceremonies have been held there to celebrate the United Nations and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 25 declares that the rights to housing, food, income, and medical care are fundamental human rights for all people. Thus, it is a double betrayal to declare UN Plaza off limits to homeless people: a betrayal of our brothers and sisters on the streets and a betrayal of the principles enshrined in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

PRESIDIO TRUST SWINDLES THE POOR

The mayor and supervisors have, through their inaction, presided over a third transgression of the rights of the poor this past month.

After years of being lied to again and again by Rep. Nancy Pelosi that vacant Wherry Housing units at the Presidio were too dilapidated to be utilized to house the homeless, advocates were shocked to discover that university students had been allowed to move into Wherry units, even though all Presidio doors remain locked shut to the homeless populace.

Rep. Pelosi's constantly repeated lies had long since been refuted by independent housing analyses of Wherry Housing conducted by Religious Witness with Homeless People and the Mayor's Office of Housing; both studies showed that the units were, in fact, eminently habitable.

Nevertheless, Pelosi continued to be an inflexible proponent of the demolition of *hundreds of Wherry Housing units*. Religious Witness activists and Homes Not Jails were forced to commit civil disobedience and be arrested by the hundreds to thwart Rep. Pelosi and prevent the National Park Service from carrying out the heartless destruction of these homes.

Finally, after years of protests, and after winning an electoral campaign in June to preserve Presidio housing, we are treated to the disgraceful spectacle of the Presidio Trust callously shoving aside homeless people, and inviting students to move into the very same Wherry Housing units that Pelosi and the National Park Service assured us absolutely had to be demolished as substandard!

In the June 2nd election, the majority of San Francisco voters approved Proposition L, the Preserve Presidio Housing initiative placed on the ballot by Religious Witness. Prop L declares that the 1900 vacant housing units at the Presidio must be preserved as rental housing, including affordable homes for low-income and homeless people. The measure directs the mayor and supervisors to deny city services needed to operate the park, unless the Presidio Trust acts to convert vacant units into rental homes.

Mayor Brown and the great majority of S.F. Supervisors endorsed this ballot measure. But their post-election silence and inaction have been disheartening. As time passes, Wherry Housing units are being rented to non-homeless tenants, homeless people are suffering and even dying on the streets, and the mayor and supervisors — who jump to attention when the city's landlords or merchants seek costly favors — are failing to respond to the will of the voters or the survival needs of the poor.

The Presidio Trust's arrogant pushing aside of poor people to enable others to live in Wherry Housing is a sell-out of the first magnitude. Religious Witness leaders are being gracious and understanding in saying they don't want to blame university students for needing a place to live in housing-poor San Francisco, and several students have expressed a desire to support Religious Witness in its efforts to open Presidio homes to homeless people.

The real blame for this debacle must be placed squarely on the shoulders of Rep. Pelosi and the Presidio Trust, who have refused to honor the democratic process and have contemptuously ignored the will of the voters of San Francisco.

But ultimately, the responsibility for implementing Prop L belongs to Mayor Brown and the S.F. Board of Supervisors. So far, their inaction has damned the hopes of the poor for homes of their own. It is time to make them honor the last election and do something to help low-income renters and homeless people — who have been the victims of backroom deals far too often in recent weeks.

Religious Witness with Homeless People is urging people to take two actions to preserve Presidio housing for homeless and low-income people:

1. Send postcards to Mayor Willie Brown and Rep. Nancy Pelosi asking that some Presidio housing units be preserved for homeless people. (Postcards are available by calling Religious Witness at 415/863-3611.)

2. Attend a Prayer Service and Public Hearing on Tuesday, October 20, 9 a.m., in front of City Hall, 401 Van Ness, San Francisco. A hearing on Prop L will be held at 10 a.m. by the Supervisors' Economic Development Committee, City Hall, 4th Floor.

Salinas Ban Overturned

from page two

ized all peaceful solicitation within 25 feet of an ATM or bank, in bank parking lots, at any bus stop or bus station, within 10 feet of any store entrance, in any outdoor dining area, and at any business where a "No Begging" sign was displayed.

The ordinance also contained a broader ban against any request for money after dark or "in an aggressive manner." The City Council's apparent target: poor people in redeveloped Old Town, particularly around the newly built Steinbeck Center; ironically, Steinbeck's memorial became an excuse for the persecution of the poor. [See *Street Spirit,* April, 1998.]

Citing the U.S. Constitution and the California Constitution's even stronger "liberty of speech" clause, Maldonado struck down 95% of the homeless-get-out law. Article 1, Section 2(a) of the California Constitution declares: "Every person may freely speak, write and publish his or her sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of this right. A law may not restrain or abridge liberty of speech or press."

"Annoyance and inconvenience are a small price to pay for the preservation of our most cherished rights," Maldonado wrote, citing *Wirta v. Alameda, Contra Costa Transit District* (1967).

Maldonado found the anti-homeless law both "under-inclusive," in that it only covers solicitation instead of all speech (hence content-based), as well as "over-inclusive" or overbroad because it covered solicitation that didn't exhibit the "dangers" claimed by the City Council (who had cited an "enhanced sense of fear, intimidation, and disorder").

"Because restaurants are held open to the public, and speech and related conduct in such locations are protected under the Liberty of Speech Clause of the California Constitution, so long as they are not basically incompatible with the normal activities of the forum, a person may go into a restaurant to solicit," ruled the judge.

This decision not only rolls back community space stolen from the poor, it expands the open area to include private businesses like restaurants normally open to the public. If upheld on appeal, it will overturn similar laws in Santa Monica, Santa Cruz, Palo Alto, and elsewhere.

Maldonado has returned the Constitution to the streets of Salinas.

For information about this case, contact Homeless United for Friendship & Freedom at 831-423-4833; e-mail: wmnofstl@cruzio.com

Street Spirit

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Women Feel the Sting of Welfare Reform

In Santa Cruz County, one out of three single mothers lives below the poverty level. As the battles for the future of our nation's safety net have raged on around us for the past few years, we have lost many.



Art by Christa Occhiogrosso

by Allison Woodman

In 1995, one out of four women lived in poverty. Two out of three adults in poverty were women. In Santa Cruz County one out of three single mothers lived below the poverty level. As the battles for the future of our nation's safety net have raged on around us for the past few years, we have lost many.

The year that welfare "reform" will be fully implemented in Santa Cruz County, 1998, is upon us. What will become of the several thousand families whose mothers will be forced to find any kind of work they will be lucky enough to secure in this town? The households who will be affected by welfare "reform" are mostly headed by single mothers. They will be forced to compete with the already large community in need of child-care funding and jobs.

Parents will be less available to already at-risk children. If a family is sanctioned for not meeting the work requirement, there is less money to try to meet the most basic needs for children who are already doing without. Most of the community resources for families living in poverty are already maxed out.

There will be even less time, therefore less opportunity, for meaningful job training or education. The prospect is high that towards the end of the 1990s we will see even more homeless children.

Welfare "reform" has been and will continue to be a hardship on the immigrant poor. They not only face exclusion from programs and benefits, but new immigration laws and practices punish the poor for having received aid legally. The result is that even those women who are here legally will have a disincentive, a climate of intimidation against the use of public aid or participation in programs that were created to improve the health and welfare of children — children who would be citizens at birth and are discriminated against while still in the womb.

There are many families where, although the parent may not have a personal disability or hardship that would prevent her or him from working, the child or children in the family may have needs that would require at least one parent to devote a lot of time and attention. The new laws restrict a parent's choices in determining how many hours of working and being separated from their children will work best for the family.

Adults must participate in work readiness programs, or work, or face grant reductions; and all non-disabled adults face eventual permanent disqualification after the 60-month lifetime limit. Many children will face the continued and increased hardship of poverty with a parent or parents who will be even less available to meet their needs. Parents will experience increased demands and stress in trying to manage work, transportation, and family while living in poverty.

Today the news headlines are about who they think the President of the United States has had sex with lately. Like that's news to women in poverty — he's already screwed all of us! Millions have been spent on the Whitewater investigation and attention to whatever other indiscretions Bill Clinton has had (like raising campaign funds). Too bad all that money and time couldn't go into resolving the lack of housing for people all over the country. We'd even be happy to settle for a little of the welfare that goes to corporate America. And, besides, creating housing would create a lot of jobs.

I'm very concerned for the many families with single parents (mothers) who are already struggling to keep their children housed, clothed, and in school. A suggestion came up in a welfare reform community meeting that it would be a great advantage for some families to count time volunteering at a child's school as work experience or job readiness activity. This would allow a parent who is working, but in need of a few more hours of work activity, to meet the requirement.

Volunteering at their child's school would benefit the school, the child, and the parent. This idea came from a parent who attended that meeting. It was clarified that activities like this could be considered work readiness activity to meet the hours of requirement, but not as the sole activity.

In facing the challenges that confront all who live in poverty, and all who provide services to this community, it is important for people to make themselves heard, to share their ideas, to communicate about what may work in trying to create a way to survive. Program implementation in Santa Cruz County can be partially shaped according to the contributions of those who participate.

Already I am aware of three separate, local grassroots efforts to obtain funding for higher education and for nontraditional job training for parents in poverty. It's important to continue to ask for resources and necessities for surviving, even conquering, poverty, whether we receive them today or not.

The one hope I have for the current welfare system is that, when these new laws are inflicted on people, society may finally see

See **The Sting of Reform** *page 13*

Coffee Shops Rule the World

(an imagined headline)

by Claire J. Baker

Creamy concern for the planet's poor/homeless that more than floats on the top. Blueberry muffins, all you want, lone woman with kids…

Environmental inroads made over Cappucino: global warming and nukes cease. The O-zone does push-ups in the Sky Gym's fresh air.

Nations adhere to treaties. The Nuclear Clock loses a half hour, and keeps ticking backwards.

We speak the language of kindness, thus understand anyone, everyone.

The buck stops at local coffee shops.

Sacramento 'Caps' Length of Shelter Stays

On September 9, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved a plan for emergency shelter for homeless Sacramentans during the winter months. This plan, while an improvement over the original proposal, reduces the number of months the Winter Overflow Shelter is open, reduces the number of beds available, and for the first time implements a "cap" on the number of days a person may stay in the shelter.

Members of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC) and other activists were able to gain an increase in beds from a proposed 100 to 200 (although historically 300 beds have been available) and to ensure that the shelter remain open from December 1 through March 31 (although, again historically, the shelter has opened as early as November.)

Activists were able to make no headway on the cap. The plan calls for "clients" of the shelter to meet with a case manager upon arrival, determine if another permanent shelter has a bed and is more appropriate and go there, or if no other bed is available the person may stay at Overflow. However, during the 14 days at Overflow, the person must meet again with the case manager, create a plan that will address the root causes of that individual's or family's homelessness, and work toward those goals.

The case manager will attempt to find services and transitional housing for the individual or family. In 14 days, if the person refuses to create such a plan or makes no effort toward implementing it, s\he cannot stay in Overflow for the rest of the season. Exceptions will be made if all programs are full or the person is making strides but finding barriers that are not his or her fault.

Activists and homeless people are alarmed at this "cap" in light of the fact that Sacramento also has an anti-camping ordinance that is enforced. There is no answer to where people who cannot stay in the shelter or camp outdoors will stay if all other permanent shelter beds are full.

SHOC requests any information that activists have from their cities about similar proposals or laws. Eddie Harris, chair, can be reached at 916-442-1198 or hn2650@handsnet.org.

More Humboldt Bay Evictions

by Ruben Botello

After evicting hundreds of homeless men, women and children off federal property on the South Spit peninsula, at the mouth of Humboldt Bay, local judges, lawyers, politicians, bureaucrats, merchants and industrialists are now targeting low-income boat owners docked in the Eureka harbor.

"It appears they don't care about the little guys," said Patrick McGrath, a local boat owner. "They are kicking them out — they have nowhere to dock their boats."

Eureka officials notified the low-income tenants their boats must be out of the Small Boat Basin by September 1 — when the $8.5 million waterfront development project that "justified" the South Spit homeless eviction, is scheduled to begin.

"Our funding stipulates that we have a year to complete this project," declared David McGinty, city services director. "We will do nothing to jeopardize four years of planning and preparation."

McGinty alleges that many of the "less desirable" boat owners are failing to pay for their mooring spots. Harvey Rose, the new city manager, also complained, "In fact, almost all the boats left are either derelict or substandard."

Bonnie Crawford of Humboldt Marine Services, in nearby Fields Landing, said there are no more docks available in the area, and that mooring charges will double after the multimillion-dollar waterfront development project is completed. Crawford explained that the development project has caused vessel owners and operators to leave, at a loss of $80,000 in business revenue already.

The eviction of boat dwellers from Humboldt Bay comes as no surprise to local homeless activists. The plan to develop Humboldt Harbor into a major port for global trade includes removing all "eyesores" from the waterfront — commencing with the South Spit homeless settlement — to attract hundreds of millions of additional tourist dollars and tax revenue to the Northcoast.

The $8.5 million project will likely attract more international crime and related social ills that other major harbor

See **Humboldt Bay Evictions** *page 13*

Building a Homeless Movement in Japan

A Japanese activist's visit to the Bay Area reveals common ground in the struggle against homelessness

"To accept all the differences among people: where they're from, race, skin color, rich or poor, whatever their beliefs and religions. Learn to all understand each other and work together to make a better world." — Gonno Masahiro

Story and photo by Lydia Gans

On a cold, foggy afternoon recently, I sat on a bench at San Francisco State University with Gonno Masahiro from Japan and Minori Yata, a Japanese-born American acting as translator, comparing notes on how poor and homeless people are treated here and in Japan. Gonno, 33, lives in Sapporo city on Hokkaido, Japan's most northerly island.

This was his first visit to the United States and he spent his three weeks here participating in Esperanto language classes at S.F. State and connecting with our Food Not Bombs collective. During his stay in the Bay Area, Food Not Bombs held a Regional Gathering with activists from many parts of the United States and Canada, and carried out a protest action which succeeded in getting the city to remove the fences around grassy areas at UN Plaza. And, of course, we kept up our regular program of serving meals to any and all hungry passers-by. Meanwhile, Gonno's group back in Japan was getting reports on all this from him via e-mail.

We started our conversation by looking at the numbers of homeless people in our respective countries, and agreed that we couldn't trust government statistics. There are certainly many more homeless people than official estimates claim, both in the United States and in Japan. "They have no visibility," Gonno said, and that is probably true in Japan even more than here.

Gonno identified this population of poor and intermittently homeless people as the day workers who get casual jobs in construction or on the docks. They are mostly miners or farm workers who have lost their jobs due to mechanization "or even businessmen who are suddenly out of jobs" because of the economy, he said.



Gonno Masahiro (left) and Minori Yata during their visit to San Francisco.

This army of people leads a very marginal existence. There is a great deal of prejudice against them. Because their lives are so unstable they are isolated from their families and become outcasts from the rigid Japanese society. Their children are stigmatized and many drop out of school. "They'll do anything for survival. Those children end up admiring and going into the Yakuza," Gonno said.

The Yakuza, the Japanese Mafia, reportedly is very powerful there. It is ubiquitous among the day workers but, Gonno asserts, "the Yakuza also are actually in control of companies." So the poor and homeless people are at the mercy of the criminal element as well as the police and the government.

During the day, beggars in the streets of Japan might just be told to move on, but at night, when no one is watching, the police can become very violent, beating these people with sticks and weapons. Although there are laws to protect them, the government does not enforce them. "The homeless people are dehumanized, their self-esteem is so damaged," Gonno said. Like here, help comes mostly from churches and Buddhist temples and from some friendly businesses such as, perhaps not surprisingly, small markets, convenience stores, and health food stores.

The population of homeless people in Japan also includes the mentally disabled, immigrants, and oppressed minorities who are segregated in "villages," much like our ghettos and barrios. Like Mexican-Americans here, Korean-Japanese are discriminated against in Japan, as are Okinawans and other minority groups. Gonno's father is Okinawan, so even though his family is middle class he has felt his society's prejudice.

Gonno has cast his lot with the day workers and with their union, which is a support group for the street people. The group is constantly harassed by the government which has installed hidden cameras in their office and taps on their telephones. No Food Not Bombs groups exist in Japan but there are groups with the same philosophy in many of the big cities.

"They serve food and some occupy the parks and serve there, distribute blankets, help them get welfare, try to get them jobs and to be independent," Gonno said. "They cannot get permits to use the park but they do it anyway and sometimes there is a struggle." I could identify with Gonno's experiences, given our similar struggles in this country.

We went on to talk about broader concerns and interests. Gonno is a performer in street theater, sometimes solo and sometimes with a group. I try to encapsulate his explanation in a few English sentences: the style is experimental, spontaneous, influenced by the work of John Cage. The mission is a search for understanding of self and society, and the message is that there are people who may not have a home but they too have value.

We talked about the big issue of world peace, and Gonno's antiwar and antinuclear testing activities. Minori explained her connection, through her brother, an organizer of the Global Peace Walk, to Food Not Bombs, which serves meals at the Nevada test site protests and other peace actions.

Minori's translation of Gonno's beliefs, which coincide with her own convictions, summed up the purposes we all share: "To accept all the differences among people: where they're from, race, skin color, rich or poor, whatever their beliefs and religions. Learn to all understand each other and work together to make a better world."

ON THE OTHER HAND

by Julia Vinograd

Think of all the pizza places
that could live happily ever after
where you're considering
building a homeless shelter.
How can you sleep at night
imagining all those innocent little pizzas
with their round trusting faces
that need a place to stay?
Or the yogurt palaces, so sweet, so clean;
do you want their chocolate and strawberry
and natural tears to drip over everything?
How can you face yourself if you make yogurt cry?
Doesn't the sound of their sobs break your heart?
Or the great chain of chocolate chip cookies,
so American
that if your mother didn't make them
you should send away for another mother
right now.
Aren't cookies and milk
the very emblem of a good home?
So don't they deserve a good home?
And don't you feel morally committed
to the high-rise American cookie?
while the homeless crumble.

New Hope that St. Vincent's Will Remain in Downtown San Rafael

by Helen Cameron

Staff, diners and friends of the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room in San Rafael are cautiously optimistic about the future location of the facility where several hundred men, women, and children gather daily for a hot meal and a sense of community.

Located for 17 years on B Street adjacent to San Rafael's downtown business district, the dining room has been pressured this year to relocate to accommodate a redevelopment program in the area.

Diners, advocates from various religious congregations and organizations, and other concerned citizens appeared en masse at a series of municipal meetings to lobby against plans to relocate the dining room outside of the downtown area. Such a move, they explained, would place the facility out of reach for a substantial number of its constituents.

Though a number of business leaders and local government representatives made the case for relocating the dining room based on their belief that it has a deleterious effect on the shopping atmosphere and that it allegedly is a locus for criminal activity, an acceptable compromise appears to have been reached. City officials and St. Vincent's are working together on a plan to relocate the dining room a few blocks from its present location on some property formerly used by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E).

"I am grateful we have the opportunity to forge a real partnership with neighbors and local government to save the soul of San Rafael."

— Sue Brown, executive director, St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room

The proposed location is still in the downtown area and shouldn't be less accessible for diners or volunteers. Sue Brown, St. Vincent's executive director, says she is "grateful we have the opportunity to forge a real partnership with neighbors and local government to save the soul of San Rafael."

Architectural plans for a new dining room call for an interior courtyard where diners can gather with a greater sense of privacy, Brown said. Investigation of the proposed site to identify potentially dangerous residual toxins must be made, and a Community Outreach and Advisory Program has been established so neighbors and nearby merchants can make decisions jointly.

Brown credited the work of the Ad Hoc Dining Room Committee, a diverse group representing all the community stakeholders, with presenting a unified report to the San Rafael City Council which paved the way for the current planning.

Portland's Campaign for Legal Places to Sleep

These efforts to sweep the homeless under the rug have, at their core, a profit-before-people intent. At such times, NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) becomes NOPE (Nowhere on Planet Earth) as police harass, arrest, and incarcerate homeless people.



We demand that Portland stop arresting homeless people for sleeping on public property within 30 days of the City Council receiving this letter. We stand solidly with our homeless brothers and sisters and say to you — our city government — that if these unconstitutional arrests do not stop, we will take civil disobedient actions.

The Campaign for Legal Places to Sleep calls on the Portland City Council to amend or abolish Portland's Camping Ordinance (14.08.250: Camping Prohibited in Certain Places). Our campaign and its supporters stand behind the following statement from Charles Gray, Homeless Action Coalition, Campaign for Legal Places to Sleep, Eugene, Oregon:

"Whether the courts consider that the US Constitution protects the right to have a legal place to sleep, or not, we have proclaimed such a right. It is absolutely basic to human life and dignity. We should not only proclaim this right, but act on it."

It is our clear position that the City of Portland needs to take a precedent-setting step in the United States by stopping the criminalization of homelessness in our community. The enforcement of the city's camping ordinance, popularly referred to as the anti-camping ordinance, has resulted not only in a shameful waste of taxpayer money and city police and jail resources — since the people targeted rarely, if ever, "go away"— it has also served to discriminate against a minority group of poverty-stricken citizens through prejudicial treatment.

While unable to solve its homeless problems which are quite obvious in the downtown core, the City of Portland makes particular distinctions among the entire homeless community by taking police action prejudicially against downtown homeless people prior to major events in the city such as the Rose Festival.

These efforts to sweep the homeless under the rug, so to speak, have at their core, a profit-before-people intent. At such times, NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) becomes NOPE (Nowhere on Planet Earth) as police intimidate, harass, arrest, and incarcerate homeless people while tolerating non-homeless peoples' camping on the sidewalks before parades.

And while it is true that our city — like cities across the nation — is sadly lacking in affordable housing and temporary shelter, and while it is also true that the City of Portland has submitted that it is working on the problem, it is also an undeniable fact that the problem is worsening and more and more homeless people are unresponsive to traditional help.

Homeless people all across this nation are tired of being institutionalized and treated as criminals. More and more people are preferring to face the elements and arrest than submit to the dehumanizing effects of governmental control over them. And while many non-homeless people would argue that this response by homeless people may be ungrateful and self-willed, nevertheless, this is the situation we must all face.

This burgeoning phenomena is on the verge of creating chaos in many cities as tensions between homeless people and police increase each day. The response of most cities, however, has not been healthy, as they incarcerate more and more people and find themselves being sued.

In Atlanta, five homeless men were partially successful in a suit against the city for arresting more than 9,000 homeless people for violating ordinances outlawing aggressive panhandling and loitering in the parking lots in the year before the Olympics. The Atlanta City Council offered to pay each of five homeless men $3,000 and provide $60,000 to hire a homeless advocate to settle the case.

In Florida, the court found that the criminalization of essential acts performed in public when there was no alternative, violated the plaintiffs' rights to travel and due process under the Fourteenth Amendment and their right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment. The court ordered the city to establish "safe zones" where homeless people could pursue harmless daily activities without fear of arrest.

In addition, recently, a federal judge ruled that Tucson cannot ban a homeless man from downtown areas — a step the man's lawyer hopes will lead to a class action suit protecting all homeless people.

There is nothing in the state or federal constitutions that declares that all citizens must live in strictly coded and therefore expensive housing that only the middle class can afford or that the taxpayers must subsidize. Some citizens cannot live in such housing. Others will not live in such housing. That is their right. Other shelter options, including camping, must be available to them as a matter of right.

Members and supporters of the Campaign for Legal Places to Sleep are not a radical group. We have taken a non-reactionary, studious, and spiritual approach to produce solutions to this dehumanizing condition in our community. We submit these solutions to you today.

We have worked diligently since early February, talking with thousands of non-homeless people, hundreds of homeless adults and youth, and our campaign — its pros and cons — has been given wide media attention. And the results of this media attention have been enlightening: scores of telephone calls from citizens fearful they are about to become homeless.

Now we stand before you, the Portland City Council. May we please say to you,

See **Legal Places to Sleep** *page 15*

CARDBOARD POEM

by John Rowe

Imagine number of cardboard boxes
that have been filled with everything,
moved in every direction,
more reused, recycled than disposed of.
But who'd imagine cardboard houses
with cardboard meals on cardboard tables,
cardboard flowers blooming in front yards.

Scene from another time:
Wounded knights on barren field
knocked off their horses, stunned,
but still clutch swords and shields.
Heard in distance: gallop building again —
battle coming back around.

Present day sword-less warrior
stands his ground on street corner —
ink-run words on cardboard sign,
inside world exposed.
When outside world thrusts in,
he'll hold sign like shield —
protection for the heart.
Others like him expand through cities;
figures blur to line between light and dark,
like faint lettering, like history lessons.

If all I had was piece of cardboard
to write poem on, I would.
Or if cardboard, too, became scarce,
I'd use my finger on muddy sidewalk
to spell a few words.
Passers-by might take notice
before rain wiped the slate clean.

YOUNG BOY ON THE STREETS

by Claire J. Baker

"I don't have a father… I need
a Big Brother… You Maybe?"

A child's story
echoing on and on
in a bus
on a foggy street
over a steam vent
wherever two meet
or hundreds rush by
by a storefront
in a park…

shouted from light poles
whispered in gutters
pleaded through tears…

"You Maybe?"

AT CHALICE LIGHTING

by Claire J. Baker

As the candle glows beside a rose
she transcends figurative pies she
has thrown; considers crossroads:
roads taken, those avoided.

She amends crashes through
locked doors;
tongue slips, satirical quips;
victory flags raised over anyone
downed.

Led by chapel, chalice and rose
she revisits humanity's inner petals,
compassioned by the pollen tickling
her nose.

Poor Leonard's Almanack

Quotations and Original Thoughts
by Leonard Roy Frank
October 1998

1. Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor.
JAMES BALDWIN, *Nobody Knows My Name,* 1961

2. There must be another way, if only because there has to be.
HERB CAEN, *San Francisco Chronicle,* 24 May 1981

3. That Love is all there is,
Is all we know of Love.
Emily Dickinson (American poet, 1830-1886), "That Love is all there is"

4. The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.
ANATOLE FRANCE (French writer), *The Red Lily,* 1894

5. No human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption.
MOHANDAS K. GANDHI, quoted in *Young India,* 26 March 1931

6. Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does.
MARGARET MEAD (American anthropologist, 1901-1978)

7. What does not kill me makes me stronger.
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (German philosopher), *Twilight of the Idols,* 1889

8. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character.
MARGARET CHASE SMITH (Maine senator), speech, 7 June 1953

9. Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music that he hears, however measured or far away.
HENRY DAVID THOREAU, *Walden; or Life in the Woods,* 1854

10. The existence of God is only slightly more incredible than existence itself.

11. The foolish mistake activity for progress, power for virtue, acclaim for merit, nonconformity for dangerousness, conviction for truth, revenge for justice, license for liberty, and kindness for weakness.

12. Wealth is best measured not by how much you have but by how little you need.

****

The title of this column derives from Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanack. Leonard Roy Frank is completing work on Random House Webster's Quotationary, a collection of more than 20,000 quotations, due out this fall.

The Fairness Agenda for America



PRINCIPLES

DIGNIFIED WORK

****

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

****

ECONOMIC REDISTRIBUTION

****

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

****

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

****

GLOBAL NONVIOLENCE

****

SOCIAL JUSTICE, INCLUDING RACIAL & GENDER

The challenges facing the world today are to provide economic security for all, reverse discrimination, achieve a sustainable environment, and above all, build a society that values and embraces all its members. The Fairness Agenda for America is based on these principles that are supported by over 150 progressive organizations, along with many members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. It is a vital, living document that reflects the needs and desires of a global society. Please use this agenda in your city councils, state legislatures, town meeting halls, candidate forums, spiritual centers, etc.

The Institute for Policy Studies and members and staff of the Congressional Progressive Caucus worked for months with a number of national advocacy organizations to craft the eight-point Fairness Agenda. More than 150 organizations nationwide have already endorsed this program and the number is growing. If you belong to an organization that has not yet endorsed, please do so.

Goals

1. ENACT A FAIRNESS BUDGET FOR AMERICA.

America's abundant resources must be used to build a decent society. We propose cutting military spending and corporate giveaways and reinstating progressive taxation, while redirecting revenues to invest in human resources, such as schools and health clinics, and in infrastructure, such as mass transit.

2. ENSURE JOBS, LIVING WAGES, BENEFITS & WORKER RIGHTS

Our nation depends on a vigorous and innovative workforce that is assured basic rights. We propose government job creation, especially in areas of high unemployment, laws requiring profitable companies to compensate workers and communities affected by job cuts, elimination of tax breaks for companies that provide excessive executive compensation, and stronger protections against labor rights violations and all forms of discrimination.

3. ENSURE EQUALITY FOR ALL.

Despite recent progress, there is still widespread discrimination in this country based on race, gender, disabilities, age and sexual orientation. Wage gaps by sex and race and de facto segregation still exist. Two means of addressing these problems include sufficient funding for agencies that administer anti-discrimination laws and reinforcing affirmative action, while exploring the integration of class-based criteria into such programs.

4. PROMOTE A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

Free trade agreements and World Bank/IMF structural adjustment programs have increased inequalities at home and abroad. We propose an international dialogue to develop alternative trade and development initiatives that encompass the protection of worker and women's rights, environmental standards, food security, and oppose the MAI, and also tackle the issues of immigration and the need to reduce inequalities.

5. SUPPORT DEMILITARIZATION, HUMAN RIGHTS & A NEW INTERNATIONALISM.

Cutting military expenditures; negotiating to eliminate all nuclear weapons; shifting R&D priorities toward pressing domestic needs; stopping NATO expansion; banning landmines; ending subsidies for arms exporters and arms transfers for dictators; banning covert operations; shifting from unilateral military aid and peacekeeping missions abroad to multilateral responses; and promoting real human rights abroad, which include political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

6. GUARANTEE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.

Distribution of more no-strings federal funds, especially to poor communities; revisions in trade agreements to allow communities to enact strong environmental and labor laws; and re-targeting federal insurance, subsidies, and loans for community development; promoting the right to a clean environment and replacing subsidies for polluters with subsidies for ecologically sound products and services. We support a shift to more sustainable agriculture that supports rural communities and a safe food supply.

7. PROVIDE ADEQUATE SOCIAL INVESTMENT.

Preserving social security and protecting it from privatization; remaking economic security structures to address the needs of the poor; offering universal access to affordable quality health care; protecting and expanding Medicare eligibility to people of all ages and income; creating a bill of rights to protect health care consumers; increasing funds for low income housing assistance; and providing adequate funding for quality public education.

8. LIMIT PRIVATE MONEY IN POLITICS.

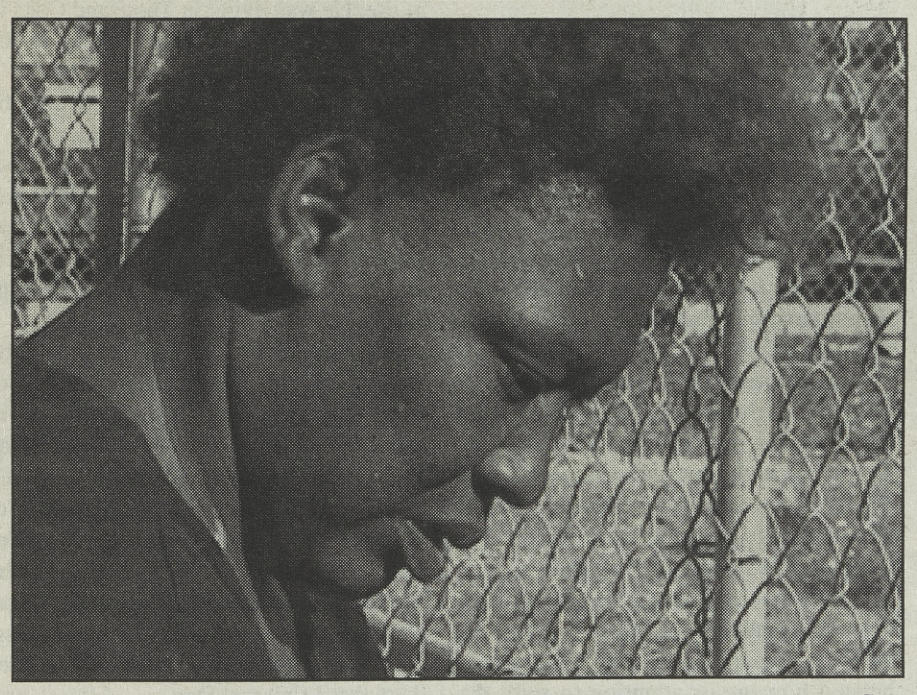
Public outrage is increasing over the abuse of campaign finance loopholes, influence-peddling, and political favors granted to special interests. Candidates who reject contributions from private sources, accept spending limits, and run shorter campaigns should have the option of receiving clean, disinterested money for their elections. Such a voluntary system would provide an alternative to private fundraising, create a financially level playing field, and tighten loopholes.

Sponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies,
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The San Francisco Progressive Challenge is building support for the Fairness Agenda by seeking organizational endorsements *and circulating a petition for individuals. The S.F. Progressive Challenge will communicate with our Congresspersons to foster* support for Fairness Agenda principles, and will develop an Email/Phone Tree Pledge to organize people to call their Congressperson and participate whenever possible in events and demonstrations that promote Fairness Agenda principles.

The San Francisco-based Economic Security Project has played a key role in initiating the S.F. Progressive Challenge and fostering Bay Area support for the Fairness Agenda. To get an endorsement form for the Fairness agenda and/or sign up for the Email/Phone Tree pledge, contact: San Francisco Progressive Challenge, c/o Economic Security Project, 1095 Market Street, Suite 812, San Francisco, CA 94103; phone: 415/553-8735.



Taylor's Campaign

One-week film engagement

Delancey Street Screening Room
600 Embarcadero, San Francisco
(between Townsend and Brannan)

October 22 through October 28
7:30 p.m. nightly

Tickets $7 at the door

Narrated by Martin Sheen and directed by Richard Cohen, ***Taylor's Campaign*** is an important new documentary about a world of unforgettable people living in an encampment of cardboard lean-tos in luxurious Santa Monica. When new laws threaten their existence, a homeless trucker, Ron Taylor, runs for a seat on the City Council as a voice for tolerance.

Taylor's Campaign returns to San Francisco for one week: Thursday, October 22, through Wednesday, October 28, at the Delancey Street Screening Room. Shows are at 7:30 each night and are followed by an audience discussion with the film director and special guests. Tickets are $7 and are available at the door. For information call (415) 552-FILM.

"Excellent documentary… cuts right to the heart of the plight of the homeless. *Taylor's Campaign* shows us how easily many of us could end up on the streets ourselves and leaves us aware of a terrible vacuum in creative, morally imaginative leadership in our self-absorbed society."
— Kevin Thomas, *Los Angeles Times*

"A thoughtful, rounded look at a subject that won't go away no matter how hard we try to ignore it."
— Renee Downing, *Arizona Daily Star*

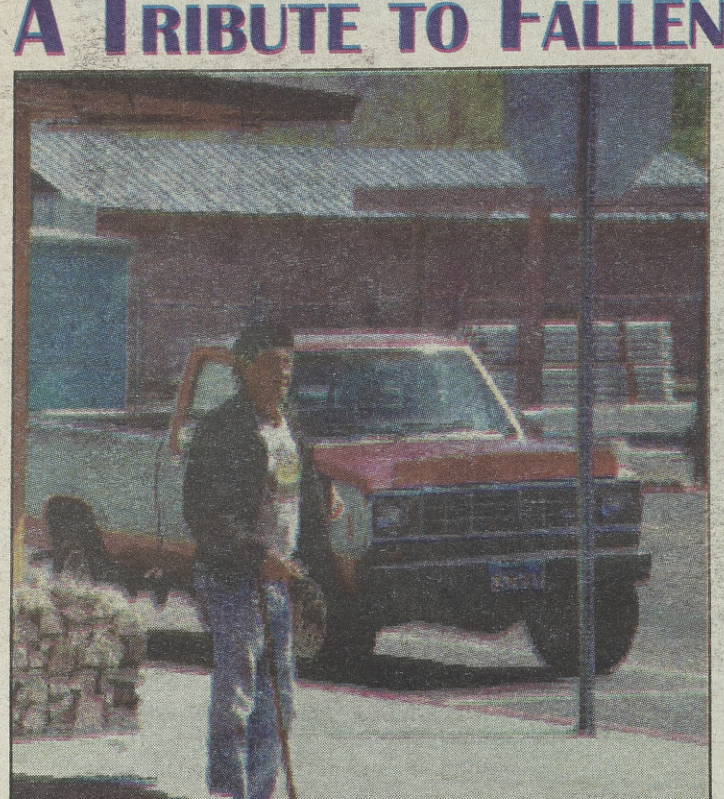
"Cohen's verite approach sensitively captures the joy and safety these individuals feel in each other's company. *Taylor's Campaign* is a gripping picture of a harrowing and compassionate world that we ordinarily pass by."
— John Gianvito, Guest Curator, *Harvard University Film Archive*

"A *Grapes of Wrath* for today. A stirring uphill battle for justice."
— Terry Messman, editor, *Street Spirit*

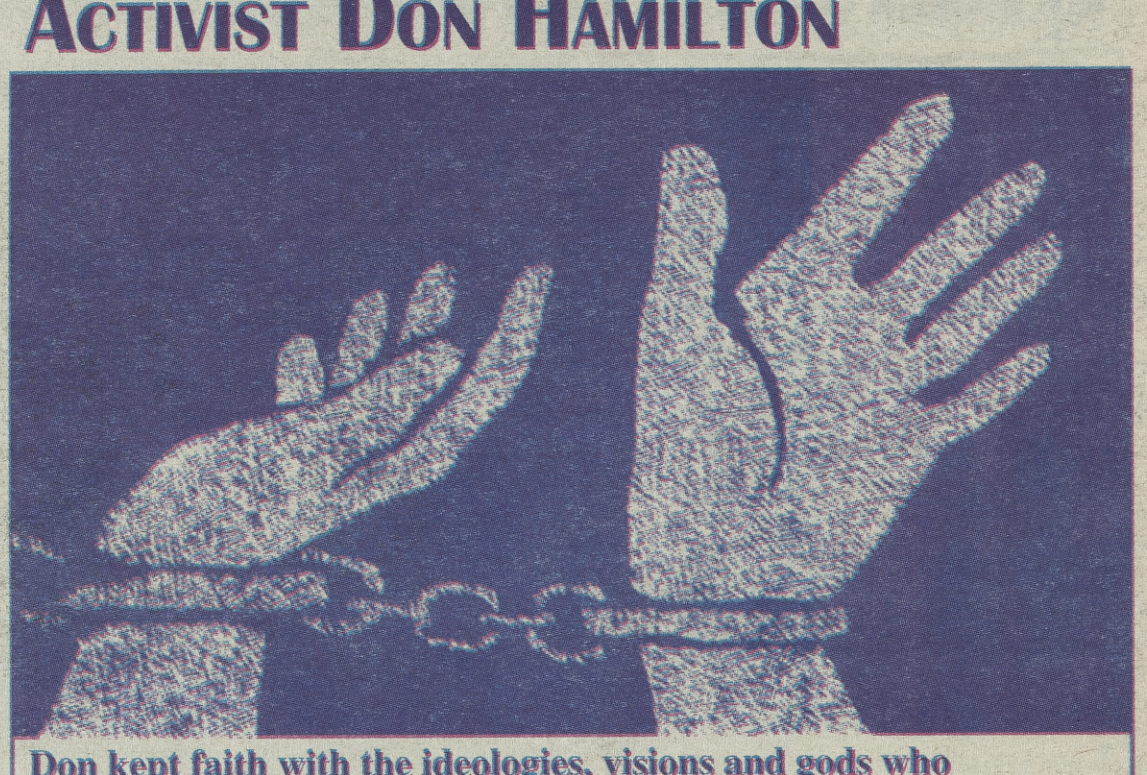
"You should see this film. It can make you think about a lot of things, about what you want our society to look like, about poverty and homelessness and the civil rights that each of us should have, to live with a little dignity, a little honor."
— Jason Albertson, *Street Sheet*

"The brash honesty of *Taylor's Campaign* infuses the tragedy of homelessness with both humor and empathy."
— Holly Payne, *Release Print*

A TRIBUTE TO FALLEN ACTIVIST DON HAMILTON



Don Hamilton, Santa Barbara activist, 1927-1998.



Don kept faith with the ideologies, visions and gods who governed his view of the world. If justice required sitting-in, he sat. If it required getting arrested, he got arrested. He was not only there when others were, in solidarity, but he was there when they were not — solitary, if necessary, but there.

by Peter Marin

Don Hamilton, a familiar figure in Santa Barbara and a vocal and vehement advocate for the marginalized and insulted and injured among us, died on July 8 after several months of what appears to have been shoddy care and mistreatment at the VA Hospital in West Los Angeles.

Don, who among other things was a fierce and dedicated homeless activist, was a familiar figure on Santa Barbara's streets and in its jails and at City Council meetings or at protests and demonstrations up and down the state.

He was a friend of mine and also, I think, a pretty good man, and both the life he led and the way he died are worthy of attention. I want to write about them here in a way that I hope will do him honor and also reveal, even to those who knew him, a bit more about his life and nature than they already know.

First, his death. I have been told the details of it by Maureen Gildea, a close friend of Don's who visited him regularly in the hospital and had his power of attorney and was also instrumental, close to the end of Don's life, in liberating him from the VA Hospital and getting him admitted elsewhere. It is not a story for the squeamish. But it should be told.

Don went down to the VA Hospital late in February of this year. Because of back problems he has spent much of the past few years in a wheelchair; and he was having problems with the circulation in his legs and was to be operated on February 26, for a clotted artery.

Apparently, when he was on the table — no one has ever received a clear explanation of this — the doctors discovered a malfunctioning kidney. So they removed it. Then Don apparently had a massive heart attack and had to be taken from the table before his leg could be done. For the next month, in Intensive Care, he was on a respirator and received dialysis every other day.

Because he was agitated, his hands were tied to the bed. He could neither speak nor gesture and so he communicated with Maureen, when she went to see him, with nods and a blinking of his eyes. Gangrene set in on his legs. Maureen, who has had some medical training, says that the problem had not advanced beyond the toes of one foot and the ankle of the other.

The doctors assured her and Don that they would cut off both legs only below the knee. But for reasons not yet clear, they amputated both legs, as Maureen puts it, "clear up to his bottom. There was nothing left. Not even stumps."

Depressed, Don refused to go back on the dialysis machine, but Maureen pled with him and he relented. For the next two months — again, neither speaking nor gesturing — Don lay in intensive care. Terrible bed-sores developed on his body and became infected. Maureen begged the staff to raise Don off the bed so that air could circulate beneath him, but they merely turned him from side to side, a strategy that did not work because the sore already extended to his hips.

Horrified at what she saw, Maureen after much labor found another hospital to take Don as a charity patient. He arrived there suffering from pneumonia, kidney failure, a balky heart and an infection that had spread from the bed-sores to the wounds left from his operations. His new doctors said "We've gotten him too late," and they told Maureen they had never seen bed-sores as bad as Don's; and they also immediately did what Maureen had begged without result the VA doctors to do: they raised Don off the bed with airpillows and tubes in an attempt to heal the wounds. It didn't work. The infection worsened.

Don was akin in his own way to the southern activists and protesters who spoke with their flesh in a kind of lived "body language" more eloquent than any speech and simply sat or stood where the law said they could not until the law was changed. He was related, too, to the solitary figure all of us saw in Tiananmen Square asserting in solitude the timeless vulnerability of human flesh against the passing powers of the army and the state.

Finally they decided to operate in order to clean out the infection. Don died on the table. The immediate causes listed on the death certificate were pneumonia, renal (kidney) failure, heart-failure and infection. The bed-sores were given as a contributing factor.

Maureen has now filed a complaint through Lois Capps' office with the Inspector General of the United States, who oversees the VA hospitals. And she also has a lawyer now, who will soon request Don's records from both hospitals. Whether the quality of his care can be called malpractice or constitutes a crime or even caused his death, cannot be said for certain. But it sure didn't shake Don Hamilton fell so entirely into the hands of an indifferent and perhaps criminal bureaucracy against which he had fought for much of his life sends legitimate shivers down the spine of anyone who values liberty, or for that matter health. The facts speak for themselves in such a terrifying fashion that one can add almost nothing.

It is impossible to imagine without rage and perhaps a dollop of fear what those last few months were like for Don, as restless and rebellious as he was, and totally alone save for Maureen's visits, and trapped in a useless body strapped to a bed, unable to protest or escape.

I find myself wanting in this piece to somehow make up for his end; I want — vainly, of course — to pay him enough belated homage or attention to right the horrific wrong that befell him. But how? Obviously, nothing suffices. Nothing makes a dent. There is little to do save to tell a small part of his story and thereby, perhaps, breathe a little life for a moment into what he did and loved.

And what was that? To understand it one must begin, I suppose with his life, though the details are sketchy and do not explain much, in the end, about Don's passions. He did not often speak about the past, even to close friends.

He was born in Tennessee in 1927. He attend high school in Burbank, California, but may not have graduated. He joined the Merchant Marine during World War II. After the war he became a seaman and saw the world. For a while, early on, he was a member of the Communist Party and also worked for the Maritime Union, though he seems — surprise! — to have had a bit of trouble in both organizations. He lived in New York for a while and attended both the Maritime Union school for organizers and the Jefferson School of Social Science. He must have married early in the '50s because he was divorced in 1955. The charge was "desertion," though it is not clear what that meant. In all, Don was married three times, and had two sets of children, three sons and a daughter. He was estranged from all of them.

Later, he worked with the United Farm Workers in California and told several friends he was a chauffeur for Cesar Chavez. He must by that point have ended his life as a seaman, perhaps because of the back injury that was to bother him late in life. He was living in Thousand Oaks in 1980 or so when he read a piece in the *Santa Barbara News Press* about a demonstration in town. It was written by Dorothy Stone, now 89, who remembers a call she got from Don explaining how her article had drawn him to Santa Barbara. He lived at first in an apartment on Garden Street, was then homeless for several years, and finally qualified perhaps eight years or so ago for public housing.

Since his arrival in Santa Barbara, Don was involved in many different kinds of causes, protests and movements, both locally and elsewhere. But almost all had to do primarily with the disenfranchised and the poor, and more often than not with families, women, and children. For many years Don was involved with the Homeless Coalition, which was for several years perhaps the most effective grassroots organization in America. It was there that I first met Don.

The Coalition was made up of both homeless activists and middle-class advocates and it brought about enormous changes in Santa Barbara, including the establishment of the first non-sectarian shelter for homeless men and the suspension of the city's laws against camping and sleeping — a change that unfortunately was only temporary. The Coalition

See **Tribute to Don Hamilton** *page 14*

THE URGENT NEED FOR AN ECONOMIC Bill of Rights

THE WELFARE OF PEOPLE IS BEING SACRIFICED TO THE LIBERTY OF GLOBAL CORPORATIONS

"True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security. We cannot be content, if some fraction of our people... is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure." — President Franklin D. Roosevelt, proposing an Economic Bill of Rights in 1944

At right, women and children were a prominent part of this Oakland rally protesting President Clinton's massive welfare cutbacks.



by Holly Sklar

The US Constitution begins: "WE THE PEOPLE of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Economic rights are fundamental to the establishment of Justice, Tranquillity, the promotion of the general Welfare and securing the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity. Economic rights are fundamental human rights. Yet half a century after President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed an Economic Bill of Rights for the United States and the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — including economic rights — the welfare and justice of people are being sacrificed to the liberty of global corporations.

We need an Economic Bill of Rights for people. We already have economic bills of rights for corporations — they're called NAFTA and GATT — which begat the World Trade Organization. With them, corporations are freely trading on cheaper labor.

A new corporate bill of rights, the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), would give international investors the unrestricted right to buy, sell, and move business and other assets; undo environmental and human rights and other protections; and undermine regulations linking public subsidies, tax breaks, and other benefits to corporate behavior.

President Roosevelt proposed an Economic Bill of Rights for Americans in 1944. "True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security," he said. "We cannot be content," said Roosevelt, "if some fraction of our people... is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure."

For a fraction of Americans today, the future is an endless Depression, minus the New Deal. The politically weakest New Deal "entitlement," Aid to Families with Dependent Children, was the first to go.

REDISTRIBUTING WEALTH TO THE RICH

Since the 1970s, the top one percent of families have doubled their share of the nation's wealth — while the percentage of children living in extreme poverty has also doubled. Today, the top one percent of American families have about the same amount of wealth as the bottom 95 percent of families. One out of four children is officially born into poverty in the United States, the world's poorest wealthiest nation.

If the U.S. government were a parent, it would be guilty of child abuse. Globally, the United States ranks first in wealth and military might — and 18th in infant morality. It ranks 26th in mortality of children under 5 years old. In other industrialized nations, health care is a right — not a commodity managed for maximum profit. But millions of Americans have no private or public health coverage. Lack of health insurance is associated with a 25 percent higher risk of death.

As Marian Wright Edelman puts it, "Why should every 66-year-old in the United States be guaranteed health coverage and not every 6-year-old?"

Affordable, quality child care is scarce. Government subsidies are inadequate. A typical child-care worker earns a little over $6 an hour, often with no benefits — the wages of the working poor. Child-care workers earn less than parking lot attendants. The Children's Defense Fund points out, "most states require 1500 hours of training to become a manicurist or hair stylist, but more than 30 states do not require a single hour of training for child-care workers."



Only with an Economic Bill of Rights will Americans be able to realize the rights to equality, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness promised in the Declaration of Independence.

Two-income families are struggling to keep up with the living standards of one-income families from older generations. Average wages have finally begun creeping up from the depths to which they had sunk, but they're still about 10 percent below 1973, adjusting for inflation. Workers can expect the next recession to bring wages down again. More people are working at poverty wages, rather than a living wage.

Today's inflation-eroded minimum wage doesn't bring a full-time worker with one child above the official poverty line, and the line is set unrealistically low. Minimum wage used to bring a three-person family above the official poverty line.

While workers' jobs and wages have been downsized, CEOs have been upsized. Average CEO pay went up 35 percent in 1997 to $7.8 million, according to *Business Week's* recent executive pay survey. Even without all the little extras like subsidized luxury housing, gourmet meals, country clubs, top-notch health care, investment advice, and so on, average executive pay comes to $150,000 a week. Average worker pay went up 3 percent last year — all the way to $424 a week.

CEO greed inflation is out of control. The average CEO made 326 times the pay of factory workers last year, up from 209 times factory workers' pay in 1996. Back in 1980, when many more workers were unionized, the CEO-worker wage gap was much smaller: CEOs made 42 times as much as factory workers.

More workers are going back to the future of sweatshops and day labor. Corporations want a cheaper, more disposable workforce of temporary workers, part-timers, and other so-called "contingent workers." Workers are increasingly expected to migrate from job to job, at low and variable wage rates, without sick leave or paid vacation, much less a pension.

SCAPEGOATS AND DRAGNETS

Today, instead of full employment, the U.S. has full prisons. It imprisons Black men at a much higher rate than South Africa did under apartheid. In the words of the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, the United States has "replaced the social safety net with a dragnet." The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that in 1985, 1 in every 319 U.S. residents were incarcerated. By mid-year 1996, the figure had nearly doubled: 1 in every 163 U.S. residents were behind bars.

As the American Dream has become impossible for more people, scapegoating has flourished. White men who are "falling down" the economic ladder are encouraged to believe they are failing because women and people of color are climbing over them to the top or dragging them down from the bottom. The myth of "reverse discrimination" resonates widely. Never mind that white males hold 95 percent of senior management positions. Never mind that women working full time, year round, earn only 74 cents for every dollar earned by men.

The U.S. Constitution once counted black slaves as worth three-fifths of whites. Today, blacks' per capita income is three-fifths of whites'. It is time to reverse the rise in inequality, and provide a solid foundation upon which all Americans can build.

ALL-AGE SOCIAL SECURITY

We need All-Age Social Security — from children to seniors. Without a solid foundation upon which all people may build — including universal health care and equitable education — there is nothing remotely approaching "equal opportunity."

We need Full Employment at Living Wages. A decent job at fair pay should be a right, not a privilege. Society can't demand that people work for a living, and yet deny many a living wage.

Today, despite the lower official unemployment rate, millions of people need work, and urgent work needs people — from creating affordable housing, to *repairing bridges and building mass transit*, to cleaning up pollution and converting to renewable energy, to staffing after-school programs and community centers. We can't let the government keep getting away with the idea that the only worthwhile jobs program is the military.

We need Community Investment and Redevelopment. Instead of providing public subsidies to unaccountable corporations, assistance should go to socially responsible workplaces, cooperatives, resident-driven community revitalization organizations, community development banks, and so on.

We need international Codes of Conduct mandating social and ecological responsibility. As President Roosevelt declared in a message to Congress on the 1937 Fair Labor Standards Act: "Goods produced under conditions which do not meet a rudimentary standard of decency should be regarded as contraband and ought not to be able to pollute the channels of interstate commerce." The same should be true internationally. We need a global minimum wage that pays people enough to live on.

In sum, an Economic Bill of Rights would include:

- The right to a job at a living wage.
- The right to equal pay for equal or comparable work.
- The right of workers to organize and bargain collectively.
- The right to adequate health care.
- The right to a decent home.
- The right to good education — from preschool through college.
- The right to paid leave for the care of newborns and sick family members.
- The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of illness, old age, childhood, disability, accident, and unemployment.
- The right to national and internation-

See **Economic Bill of Rights** *page 16*

A SPECIAL PLACE

Short story by Robert E. Johnson



Art by Christa Occhiogrosso

For a disturbing moment a vision came into her mind so vivid it was as if she viewed the future. She saw herself, older and heavier with long gray hair and stooped shoulders, struggling under the burden of oversized garbage bags, decrepit and destitute: a bag lady. She shuddered at the thought, and folded her arms about herself for protection.

Dusk was falling when Joyce pulled into the parking lot and brought the station wagon to a stop, the brakes screeching in protest. She switched off the lights and ignition. The engine continued its desperate struggle, gasping and shaking as if in death's grip. When it finally died an eerie silence fell. Virtually in a trance, Joyce sat clutching the steering wheel, unaware of her grip until her fingers began to ache.

She released the wheel and sat back. Tears gathered in her eyes with the spontaneity of a cloudburst and exploded in an emotional release as furious as a summer storm. She buried her face in her hands against the downpour, as much in relief as in despair.

Driving the last few miles had been a wrenching experience for Joyce. The vehicle's brakes, which were getting worse, forced her to creep through an area of the city infested with drugs, prostitution, and crime. Many of the buildings were run down. Standing among these were boarded-up structures. Glittering with broken glass and litter, vacant lots dotted the area while graffiti and trash proliferated like fungi and weeds.

Joyce imagined her progress being followed from dark hollows by fiendish characters who salivated at her distress, waiting for the critical moment to strike. Even crossing the bridge that separated poverty from prosperity, she drove with the seething terror of an Ichabod Crane. All the while a crimson light, like an evil eye, glared on the instrument panel warning that the engine was dangerously overheated.

Somehow, she had managed to reach the safety of the supermarket parking lot. Now she peered through the windshield and failing light as wisps of steam issued from the vehicle's hood like emancipated ghosts. More than an ill omen, Freddy, her mechanic, told her that water was getting into the cylinders because of a defective head gasket. Although this description was difficult for her to follow, he had demonstrated that it was not an easy repair job.

A maze of the components, belts, hoses, and wires would have to be disconnected or removed from the engine. Parts and labor would cost nearly $200. Then there were the brakes, which would cost another $75. Since an auto repair shop would charge twice as much, these prices were a bargain. While she could postpone the brake job a little longer, the engine's state was critical. It was only a matter of a few miles or a few days before the car would stop running.

Joyce considered herself a strong person, but her situation had become desperate; and strength alone could not save her from the disaster which hounded her relentlessly. It was as if the gods had set the odds against her or the devil was asking for his due. She felt that if one more thing went wrong — a straw added, a nail lost — she would be living in the streets.

The station wagon, a motley '83 Custom Supreme, was not only her transportation, it was her home. Without the car, she would be forced to rely on shelters, centers, and churches that served meals and provided services.

For a disturbing moment, a vision came into her mind so vivid it was as if she viewed the future. She saw herself, older and heavier with long gray hair and stooped shoulders, struggling under the burden of oversized garbage bags, decrepit and destitute: a bag lady. She shuddered at the thought, and folded her arms about herself for protection.

She would, no doubt, lose the few remaining personal belongings she had managed to salvage, as well as the tools and supplies needed in the house cleaning business she worked so diligently to develop. Joyce currently had three regular clients. She had contracted some work from an apartment manager, an individual who seemed more interested in her physical attributes than her work. When she failed to respond to his advances, he stopped using her services.

Her goals, however, were to acquire new customers and expand her schedule from 15 to 40 or more hours a week. She often envisioned a thriving organization with a staff of energetic workers wearing white uniforms with a circular logo in bold blue lettering: "You're the Boss — House Cleaning." Although the catchy name was inspired by a TV sit-com, Joyce felt that deferring to the customer would have a positive impact on her business. From such a position, how could the business not thrive?

In her most precious daydream (for dreams eased her pain), with success and financial security gained, she pictured a cozy cottage with a fireplace and hardwood floors in a quaint neighborhood, a white picket fence surrounding a large yard with shade trees, a flower garden displaying an array of color, and a large playful dog. These images were of a special place she had known as a little girl, which, after lying dormant in her heart, had blossomed in her mind.

In reality, however, it had been difficult finding new clients and surviving. The money she earned was barely enough to live on, and went quickly on gas, food, and the necessities of life. Although she had managed to set aside $50 in a postal money order, it was not nearly enough to get the car fixed. Somehow she had to come up with another $150 or remain teetering on the verge of homelessness — with disaster snapping at her heels like a vicious dog. But Joyce was a fighter and a survivor. She would find a way; she must.

Darkness descended, and light from overhead lamps flooded the parking lot. With her anxieties quelled, calmness returned and she was gripped by a ravishing hunger. She had had nothing to eat since lunch, and eating was one of the few pleasures she still enjoyed. Aside from the safety of the location and the rapport she had developed with some of the store's employees, Joyce was particularly taken with the delicatessen, which boasted a wide variety of hot and cold meats, salads, and a grand selection of delectables. Just the thought of this bounty was enough to arouse her appetite, lifting her spirits.

She stepped from the car into a mild evening with one thing on her mind: food. Only the reek of fumes from the damaged engine disturbed her composure. But a movement in the darkness next to another car startled her momentarily.

As if on the trail of a scent, a medium-sized black dog stepped from the shadows, its nose to the pavement. When it saw Joyce it gave a start, then stopped, observing her keenly. Joyce realized the skittish animal was not a threat. So as not to frighten it, she backed away slowly and turned, her long easy steps taking her around the side of the building to the supermarket entrance.

Joyce was tall, nearly five foot ten. Her once slender frame had grown copious, and she attempted to conceal her Rubenesque features in loose, baggy clothing. She twisted her thick black hair into long deadlocks, binding them with a leather thong, a token to the Cherokee and Creek blood that highlighted her Afro-American features. At forty, her dark skin was unblemished. Her full lips, almost purple in hue, were delicately arched and her cheekbones prominent. However, large dark eyes dominated her features and, in a twinkle, they could sparkle delightfully or smolder fiercely.

But no longer was she the hard, unyielding individual who demanded so much and gave so little; nor did she use arrogance as a weapon or her beauty as a lure. The struggle to survive had become her primary concern as the necessities of life became harder to procure. Yet she ate heartily and grew healthy despite her difficult situation. Now, peering through the glass at the bounty with the fascination of a child in a candy shop, she shopped for her dinner as if nothing else mattered.

After her spree, returning to the car, she could not resist opening the warm package that spewed a delectable aroma. She had bought the very things she resolved to avoid: an order of macaroni and cheese, potato wedges, a small order of ambrosia for dessert, and four spicy chicken strips, one of which she removed and began munching. As she approached the car she saw the dog again. The animal, its tail limp, its head lowered, struck a sensitive nerve in Joyce. It was as if she could feel what the animal was experiencing: uncertainly, fear, loneliness.

"That's all right. I'm not going to hurt you," she said in an even, soothing tone. "I think I know the feeling."

The dog seemed to heed her words, for it perked its ears and cocked its head. Joyce casually tossed the piece of chicken she had bitten in the animal's direction. The dog gave a nervous start; but, after investigating and finding the morsel, consumed it in a couple of hasty bites.

The animal looked up with dark glassy eyes, licked its chops and sniffed the air, as if asking for more while trying to get a good whiff of its benefactor. Joyce had bought more than enough for herself, and she pulled out another chicken strip and tossed it in the dog's direction.

"That's all fellow," she said, getting into the car on the passenger side, moving a cardboard box that held her papers. Unable to tolerate clutter, she kept the interior neat and orderly. She opened the package and began setting up her meal

See **A Special Place** *page 11*

BAG LADY

by Julia Vinograd

It's been so long.
She's piled on coats, sweaters, shawls
like the fat of a hibernating bear
and they bleed when the polyester tears
against an iron railing.
Not very much, she can always stop the
blood with yet another piece of cloth,
when it dries it looks just like spilled food.
It's not as if it were her blood,
at least, not exactly.
She used to have a cat.
Her grey and white tennis shoes
with broken laces have the same stripes
as her cat and when she's left a streetcorner
there's an empty can of cat food
on a newspaper.
She doesn't have a can-opener.
She may pick up the empty cans
from dumpsters.
Blotched puffy fallen face
moving fast to slap away some boys
standing too close to her bags.
Loud voice parodying itself,
fake whine, fake screech,
fake witch for a fake world.
A little low chuckle buried between her chins
when she's pleased,
her twisted fingers caressing
a bright yellow plastic flower
on one of her overflowing bags.



Art by Christa Occhiogrosso

In her most precious daydream (for dreams eased her pain), she pictured a cozy cottage with a fireplace in a quaint neighborhood, a white picket fence surrounding a large yard with shade trees, a flower garden displaying an array of color, and a large playful dog. These images were of a special place she had known as a little girl...

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like a picnic on a towel placed on the console that separated the front seats.

Through the window, she saw that the dog had devoured the chicken, and was sniffing about. She wished she could do more, but the situation was beyond her. Probably a stray, she thought. Anyway, she had more than enough problems to contend with rather than getting involved with a stray dog. She ate heartily, and her problems slipped to the back of her mind.

After finishing the meal and cleaning up, she pulled out her appointment book. Under the gloom of parking lot lights, she examined her schedule for the coming day. She had one cleaning job the following afternoon that would take two hours, and a later appointment concerning a prospective job which, if secured, would increase her income significantly. At some point she hoped to go by the main post office and check general delivery for any mail. But first thing in the morning she would have to see Freddy about the car.

Joyce had met Freddy through a mutual friend. He worked from his garage behind his parents' house. He had done most of the work on the car and, somehow, he managed to keep the vehicle running. A respectable friendship had developed between them, and he never made any advances in her direction. However, she sensed he found her attractive and that if encouraged he might respond. In the course of such thoughts, as was her fancy, she let the idea play in her mind.

For over a year she had avoided emotional ties, as well as suppressing those feelings that, at times, caused her body to burn with desire. She knew loneliness and the distress of being unfulfilled. Yet she knew how to entice a man. Maybe she could work something out with Freddy about the car. A tingling sensation shot through her body, and her face flushed. This reaction was not triggered by arousal, but rather by revulsion and abashment for considering so devious an idea. She was a different person now and would not revisit the past. Yet, something had to be done about the car or she would lose everything.

It was late and there were only a few vehicles where she parked. Making sure all doors were locked, she moved into the back of the station wagon and pulled a curtain strung behind the front seat, closing off the rear area. The side and rear windows were covered with sun-faded blue curtains; this constituted her sleeping quarters. She also kept personal items and cleaning supplies neatly boxed and stacked to one side.

She adjusted the sleeping pallet made of a foam cushion, blankets, and one of her grandmother's quilts. As the night was pleasant, she removed her shoes and outer garments, and slipped under the covers. Closing her eyes, she tried to lull her troubled mind into sleep.

But the night was not a peaceful time for Joyce, for she was often visited by her fears. Although this parking lot was safe, every sound brought her around. In the past, in other places, there had been occasions when she woke to people breaking into vehicles nearby. Once, parked on the street, someone had lifted her hood to steal the battery. In desperation, she blew the horn, and the thief slipped back into the darkness. She drove the rest of that night, shaken and afraid to stop.

She could not deny the vulnerability of her position, and during the night she slumbered for fleeting moments. Just before daybreak, however, she fell into a fretful sleep. A number of delivery trucks were unloading products, and the clatter of labor strafed the car. Joyce woke up tired. She had survived another night, but the problems she evaded in sleep were now upon her. Leisure was not a luxury.

She rubbed the sleep from her eyes and, gathering clean clothing she kept prepared in packets, began dressing in the cramped compartment. She fixed her hair, and straightened the sleeping quarters.

While Joyce was usually reserved in her dealings with people, her persona, when released, had a magnetic effect. She had developed a rapport with many of the store's employees, and gained permission to use the facilities. Securing the car, she had taken but a few steps when something (a feeling, a sound, a sensation) caused her to stop. Looking around, some distance behind, she saw the dog. Obviously, she had made a friend. A warm, mellow feeling as special as a rainbow surged through her. She went to the store with a ray of hope, and a bounce in her steps.

After attending to her needs, she headed to the delicatessen and picked up a cup of coffee to officially start the day. Though nothing had changed in her life, somehow things seemed different.

Heading out of the store, a steaming cup of coffee in hand, she was struck by an impulse she could neither deny nor resist. Of course she had splurged last night, and had very little cash, but she found enough change in her pockets to buy a can of dog food.

It took very little coaxing to entice the dog, a medium-sized black Labrador, to accept the food she placed on a piece of paper. He wolfed it down hungrily. When he finished, Joyce rubbed his back, and the animal responded by wagging its tail to the extent that its entire body rocked joyfully. A passerby would have thought she had raised the animal from a pup.

Joyce discovered that the animal was not a male, but a female who had never nursed pups. Her snout and eyebrows were sprinkled with gray, and her dark eyes appeared soft and dreamy as Joyce stroked her back. The animal was wearing a collar with three tags which Joyce examined. The first tag had the name and address of a veterinary clinic, and a six-digit number. The next tag was from a Companion Dog Service which had an address and phone number in another city. But it was the third tag that contained the information Joyce sought: the owner's name, Gary Covey; his address; and the dog's name, Willow.

"Well, Willow. This isn't Kansas or the Emerald City, but maybe we can get you back to your master," Joyce spoke to the animal, who, with sparkling eyes, seemed to respond to the sound of her voice.

Not wanting to lose the dog, she opened the door, inviting her into the car. Willow jumped into the front seat as if she had been doing it all her life. The animal, although inquisitive, seemed completely at home.

It was still early when Joyce filled the radiator, and she agonized when the car balked at starting. Eventually it roared to life, and she pulled out of the lot. There was more traffic on the bridge, but it did not seem as desolate or foreboding as the previous night. Even after crossing the bridge, the neighborhood she entered somehow did not seem as barren.

Willow kept her head out of the window, excited by the air streaming across her face. She continually tried to bite at the wind, her jowls pulled back as if laughing. These antics caused a smile to brighten Joyce's face, a face that normally wore a sullen mask. It would have been so nice if she could keep Willow, but she had neither the space nor the money. Anyway, Willow's owner, Gary Covey, was probably looking for her.

So, driving slowly, Joyce enjoyed the moment, the morning, and her new friend. She was still some distance from Freddy's place when the red light flashed on the dash. It did not break her spirits, for it had been expected. She had developed the procedure of driving in stages: when the red light came on, she would stop, let the engine cool, replace the water, and drive again.

A filling station was at the end of the block and she pulled in, parking in the service area. There was a pay phone and she felt it was a good time to contact Willow's owner. As if an everyday occurrence, with her forepaws on the window, Willow watched from the car as Joyce dialed the number. The phone rang on the other end, and rang and rang.... Joyce thought, "Where are you, Gary Covey?"

* * * * * *

After years of gallant struggle, Gary Covey had realized his dream of an apartment that fulfilled his expectations. Located in a quiet residential district, it seemed as solitary as a country cabin. Less than a week had passed since he moved in and there was something about the newness of the experience that should have been motivating, if not gratifying.

Through high side windows, jasmine, in a profusion of delicate white flowers as ubiquitous as snowflakes, inundated the fence that bordered the adjoining property. As spectacular as was this view, it could only complement that from the front bay window. In their cinder beds, a half dozen or so rose bushes put forth a myriad of yellow, pink, ruby and creamy blossoms. There was even a rose of so lavender a hue that, under certain light, it appeared almost purple. In another age such a specimen would have brought a king's ransom.

Behind the roses a neatly manicured lawn ran to the front fence. Two trees, like sentinels, secured the background in shade. Yet a wide swatch of blue sky could be seen, and the morning sun flooded a portion of the lawn through this opening, casting rays deep into the room. A spider plant, like a caged bird, hung in the window soaking up the radiance, while other potted plants along the floor grew as lush as rainforest inhabitants. But the magnificence of this picture was lost on Gary, whose spirit was shrouded in a debilitating depression.

Born with cerebral palsy, Gary's cantankerous body had a will of its own. The harder he tried to control himself, the more his limbs jerked and flailed. The greater his concentration when speaking, the more incomprehensible his speech became. All the while his face would

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door to a residence

by Eric Robertson

i felt disconnected to my society.
all the locks were brass and
my key was a fish.
i swam in pools of green
and yellow street lights.
i saw a man collecting cigarette butts
a pigeon pecking at cracks.
"who has no shoes,
let me give you some"
a woman said wearing a white apron
and blue dress
and the block I walked down became
longer and longer
the hill I climbed forever going down.
there used to be a hot dog vendor
on this block
a boy who sold papers
and i used to read the news and ask for
one with extra relish and mayo...
i was always strange
but now
i felt disconnected to my society
and all the locks are brass
and my key is just a fish.

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twist, and his body contort. But he was not dissuaded by these afflictions, and assumed an active and purposeful life. As such, the depression that currently wrecked his spirits was especially difficult for him to endure.

Upon meeting Gary, considering his spastic movements, speech impediments, and crooked smile, it was easy to perceive the contortions of a grounded albatross. To spend time with him, however, and be exposed to his intellect, his dedication to the disabled community, his accomplishments, and his determination, was to appreciate the tenacity of a peregrine falcon.

Gary's approach to life was manifested in his unrelenting determination. While the world stood on the threshold of a new millennium, he often surmised, the dragons of social injustice and prejudice that roamed so freely during darker ages still wreaked havoc. It was these monsters that plagued the disabled that Gary fought with dedicated abandon.

Few have encountered an individual who seemed so out of control physically yet so dedicated and intense mentally. If he carried a banner into battle it would probably be distinguished by a stark replica of a bird of prey with talons extended and eyes ablaze against a purple background, his favorite color.

Numerous plaques and certificates graced the walls, attesting to successful campaigns against what he considered the forces of darkness. His most cherished possession, perhaps, was the Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Design he earned from the University. It was a tribute to eight grueling years of hard work and inexhaustible determination.

He had battled the books and a system which, at the time, made only token concessions for the disabled. But Gary managed to cut through all forms of bureaucratic tape as if they were weeds, carving a path for himself as well as his kind. Yet, he would resent being labeled a pathfinder, for he considered himself no greater or less a person than anyone else. He simply insisted on being treated like anyone else.

Against the wall, beneath the jasmine-spangled windows, stood a piece of furniture that was a work of art as well as a functional work station. The elaborate structure was of his design, and contained a computer, printer, scanner, a futuristic device that could read the print pages, as well as other components. Although severely limited in his ability to use his hands, by grasping a pointer in his teeth and maneuvering his chair into position, he could operate each module set at the proper height to allow his total access.

In the field of environmental design, Gary Covey presented new insights in the use of space for the disabled. A highly respected and sought after consultant, his design work afforded him the financial means to lead a comfortable and meaningful life. In this respect, though loneliness was a constant companion, Gary was a happy person.

In the corner of the room between the bay window and the work station, setting diagonally, was a television with a screen that seemed adequate for a small theater. However, it sat gray and silent because the remote control lay on the floor. Gary could not retrieve it, and thus he sat helpless and dejected. Unable to appreciate the exuberance of spring that flourished outside the window or turn on the TV which kept him company while he worked, he sat in the middle of the room as tormented as a prisoner in a dungeon. Rare were the times in Gary's life that he allowed himself to wallow in self-pity.

The wall clock showed a few minutes to nine. At 12:30 his afternoon attendant would arrive and prepare lunch. But it was Gary's personal companion — his faithful squire, loyal and true — that filled his dreary thoughts and caused his dejection. If only he knew where she was or what had happened. If only the phone would ring or someone would call with some information.



Art by Christa Occhiogrosso

While the world stood on the threshold of a new millennium, he often surmised, the dragons of social injustice and prejudice that roamed so freely during darker ages still wreaked havoc. It was these monsters that plagued the disabled that Gary fought with dedicated abandon.

No matter what Gary encountered, whether he was feeling lost or helpless, whenever his feelings dropped to deplorable depths, there was one concept that would always spark his spirits. It was almost an automatic response, like a safety switch or an escape valve, which was activated whenever he realized he was acting like a handicapped person. He resented the term handicapped with a passion. He was not handicapped! Not a beggar with a cap in his hand pleading for a pittance. He was not pitiful, and he detested indulging in self-pity. Fury at this weakness fueled an inner flame.

Now he was raging for action, and his mind soared on wings of determination. He would call the animal shelters and the veterinarian to see if someone had reported Willow. He would put an e-mail message on the disabled network online service and run an ad in the local newspapers. He engaged his wheelchair and while maneuvering to the workstation to begin this work, as if triggered by the irony of coincidence, the telephone began to ring.

* * * * * *

Joyce was about to hang up when someone answered.

"Hello." The voice was strained, and difficult to understand.

"Hello, I'm trying to reach a Gary Covey," she continued, speaking a little loud to compensate for the softer voice on the other end.

"This is Gary."

"Hi Gary, my name is Joyce. I got your phone number off of a tag on a dog named Willow. She seemed to be lost and I was calling to see if she belonged to you."

"You found Willow!"

"Yes, she's right here looking at me now."

"Thank you. I worried myself sick wondering about her. I thought she was gone forever. Is she OK?"

"She's safe and in good health."

"Where are you now?"

It was difficult for Joyce to understand all that Gary said due to his impaired speech. But she was patient and able to understand most of what he said. She told him their location and learned that he had recently moved. The address on the tag was incorrect, and she was not that far from his new lodgings. Since it was early in the morning of a pleasant day, and the car required cooling down time, she decided to walk. It would take no more than 15 or 20 minutes, she estimated, and she could certainly use the exercise.

Joyce could take no chances with losing Willow now. Using a thin rope, she made a leash for the animal who seemed not to care that her freedom had been taken. The two headed down the street, reminiscent, perhaps, of a hunting team venturing onto a savanna at the dawn of civilization: Willow leading the way, her tail high in the air, Joyce following, her strides long with a warrior's stealth yet as graceful as a princess.

The distressing miseries of the previous night, like the demons they were, shied away from daylight. Though far from finding a solution to her problems, Joyce was not tormented. In fact, she was happy and her spirits were high as she and Willow progressed through a peaceful middle-class neighborhood. The houses were fairly old but well-kept. Large trees shaded the sidewalks and streets, and flowers of all description and arrangements brightened the neatly trimmed yards. Maybe one day she could afford to live in such a neighborhood.

The cars on the street were a mixed variety of old and new. Some of the newer cars appeared well used while some of the older cars were well maintained. This caused Joyce to think about her car needs.

She determined that the best way to deal with the subject was to be open and honest with Freddy. For the last year or so he had done all the work, and she had always paid, never questioning. She trusted him. If only he would trust her. She decided to offer him 50 dollars in advance, and maybe he would allow her to make weekly payments. She could pay him off in a month. Of course, it would cut deep into her finances. But the idea seemed feasible, and she felt better.

The distance to Gary's house was greater than Joyce had anticipated, and her legs and thighs were beginning to feel the affect of the walk. They were a little more than a block from Gary's when they came upon a small neighborhood park. There was a multicolored structure with rings, bars and a slide for children, a few benches, and a water fountain.

The day had turned warm and Joyce welcomed a drink. Willow, with tongue dangling, was also in need. After drinking, Joyce looked about for some container to fill for Willow, but finding nothing, cupped her hand and allowed the animal to lap in this fashion. It was a tickling sensation that warmed Joyce's heart, sealing a bond between the woman in turmoil and the lost animal.

She took a seat for a moment's rest and Willow curled up next to her on the ground, panting heavily. Closing her eyes, Joyce lifted her head and felt the sun's warmth on her face. Suddenly a sadness came over her. It seemed strange that this animal could come into her life so suddenly and have such a positive affect, but be gone so quickly. She reminded herself that Willow was not her dog and recalled the distorted yet happy voice over the phone. She opened her eyes, looking down at Willow. Despite her feeling of loss, she knew she was doing the right thing.

When they came to Gary's block, Willow strained at the leash like a lead dog on a sled team. On the sidewalk a few houses down the block, an individual sat in a wheelchair. With a final jerk, which took Joyce by surprise, Willow freed herself and raced down the street. Joyce watched as the animal, nearly leaping into the person's lap, stood on hind legs with front paws on the person's legs. A deformed hand gently stroked the animal's head. Joyce was taken aback by the little man in the wheelchair. In his rapture he was cooing something to Willow, when he looked up at Joyce who towered above him.

"You must be Joyce."

"Yes," she acknowledged, looking into cobalt gray eyes as steady as her own.

"You are an angel."

"I don't know about all that," she said taken aback by his intensity and flattery.

"Well, I think you are. Come in. Let me show you something," he said, indicating with a jerk of his head that she should follow, a crooked smile upon his face. Although his movements seemed animated, he turned the wheelchair smartly and proceeded down the narrow walkway that bordered the yard. Willow was by his side, as he had looped the rope around one wrist.

Though Joyce had done her deed, seeing Willow safely home, she experienced a melancholy feeling. Then, there was something almost hypnotic about the little man with the uneven smile she found intriguing. He was neatly dressed, in blue slacks and a blue and gray plaid shirt. Though his movements were erratic, his gray eyes were steady and alert. Obediently, she followed, passing the colorful roses, the air saturated with their seductive fragrance.

At the bottom of the walkway, Gary made a sharp turn, cleared the opened door, and glided into the apartment. Joyce, not knowing exactly what to expect, was suddenly in awe, for nothing could have prepared her for what she encountered. The room seemed part living room and part office. There was a marble lined fireplace at one end of the room and a black leather couch with a glass table on a chrome pedestal against one wall. A chrome and brass lamp, like a sculpture, arched over the couch. Though the middle of the room was clear, the floors were highly polished hardwood.

On the other side of the room was the large-screen television. The multidimensional work station with its computer equipment stunned Joyce in its sophistica-

See **A Special Place** *page 13*

Mr. Question

with EJ Corder

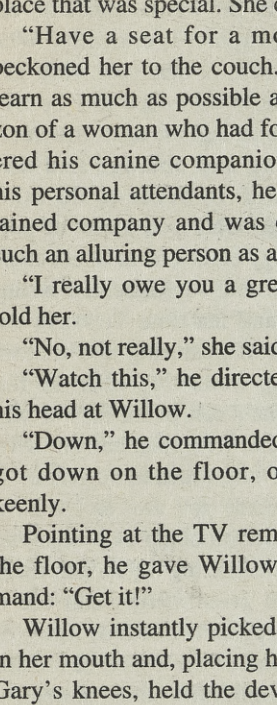
Do you plan to vote on November 3rd?

(asked at United Nations Plaza, San Francisco)



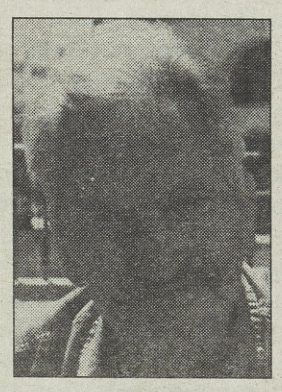
Bobby Dansby
unemployed

"Sure. I have to check the ballot to see what's really happening. There are some things you can vote for and it don't do any good. There are so many politicians and once they get in office they start stealing."



Marguerita Descalso
child-care provider

"Yes, because I think that for as much money as the government has they're putting it in the wrong places and the wrong hands. We're putting money into other countries while there are children going barefoot and hungry in our own country. The money our country makes should be used for food and clothing and medicine, not armaments."



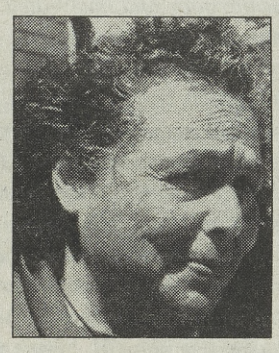
Pete Descalso
ex-lumberjack

"Oh, yeah, of course I'm going to vote. I'm going to vote 'No' on practically everything because I don't think throwing money at problems ever helps. The government's keeping people reasonably contented so they don't rock the boat."



Angela Peninger
union member

"No, I'm not a citizen. My mother died three months before she was going to become a U.S. citizen. People with police records in America can't become citizens and vote.... Everybody that lives in a country and pays their taxes should have a say in how it's spent."



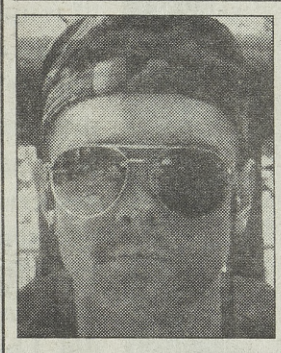
Dolores Salazar
retired bar owner

"Yes, because I'm an American Citizen. I was born right here in San Francisco. I'm going to vote for the Mexicans so they can stay here. I'm going to vote to stop the violence and keep places clean like where homeless sleep."



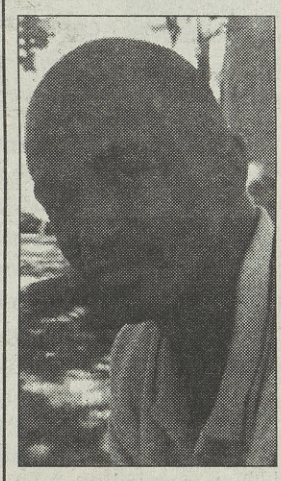
Cleveland Gigger
unemployed

"I can't vote because I'm on probation. I just got out of jail recently. People with power, rich against the poor, that's all I see. I don't want to kill anybody, I just want to live and let live."



Robert Picard
landscaper

"If I can vote I probably will, but I think I need a California ID to register and I don't know how to get ahold of my birth certificate in Wisconsin. If you want to affect change you have to do it yourself."



Charles E. Gibson
construction worker

"Fuck no, I'm not because I see the system as anti-black, anti-poor, and the alleged choices are non-choices. Nothing's really going to change. Take Jordan and Brown. Brown's whole rhetoric is more sensitive to the homeless. But if you take a look at SF Police statistics or around on the street, you'll see that nothing has really changed. Things may even be worse."

A SPECIAL PLACE

from page 12

tion. There were photographs and art work on the walls, as well as a number of certificates. Through a doorway, she made out what was the kitchen and dining area, and a bedroom through another door, a purple spread covering the bed.

But it was the view out of the front window, so peaceful and tranquil, that struck her with an overpowering sensation of déjà vu. She had to have been here before, maybe as a little girl, maybe in a dream. There was something about this place that was special. She could feel it.

"Have a seat for a moment," Gary beckoned her to the couch. He wanted to learn as much as possible about this amazon of a woman who had found and delivered his canine companion. Aside from his personal attendants, he seldom entertained company and was elated to have such an alluring person as a guest.

"I really owe you a great deal," Gary told her.

"No, not really," she said modestly.

"Watch this," he directed her, bowing his head at Willow.

"Down," he commanded Willow, who got down on the floor, observing him keenly.

Pointing at the TV remote control on the floor, he gave Willow another command: "Get it!"

Willow instantly picked up the remote in her mouth and, placing her forepaws on Gary's knees, held the device until Gary retrieved it, allowing it to fall in his lap.

"Good dog."

Gary smiled in satisfaction at Willow's performance, and Joyce sat thoroughly amazed. It was obvious that Willow was a highly trained animal, but before she could speak Gary responded.

"She can open doors, turn on and off lights, carry things in a backpack I have, and can even pull me about in my manual wheelchair. If I had lost her I would not have been able to get another animal. That's why I'm indebted to you."

"I was just in the right place at the right time," Joyce said, somewhat embarrassed at his praise and amazed at the life he lived. "How did she happen to get away?"

"I've only been in this apartment a week. There's a large backyard. I didn't know it at the time, but the fence was broken. Everything being new to Willow, she got out the fence and probably tried to get back to the old apartment. I thought I would never see her again. I owe you a great deal."

"I'm glad I was able to help." Changing the subject she remarked, "You have a very nice place."

"Thank you. I've worked pretty hard; but that's life."

"How do you keep the floors so nice?" Joyce noticed that everything was spotless and dust-free.

"People come in and do various jobs for me, all the personal things I can't do for myself. The cleaning, laundry, cooking."

"I'm in the cleaning business myself, maybe at some point we could talk."

"Yes, I think that would be a good idea."

Gary was delighted at the prospect of keeping in touch with this person. He also realized that he and Joyce had been carrying on a normal conversation. He had not repeated himself once to be understood. There were very few people who could understand him, and certainly not upon an initial meeting. He often joked that Willow understood him better than anyone and she was a dog. But, even aside from this remarkable ability Joyce demonstrated, there was something about her he found irresistible. But then, he had always been drawn to lovely women.

"Are you looking for work?"

"Yes, I'm trying to get more customers."

"I'm sure we can work something out. You've got my number. Why don't you give me a call in a couple of days and we'll set something up?"

"I certainly will," she said, charged by the prospect of gaining a customer and, perhaps, a friend. If not for Willow, she would have never met Gary. She looked at the animal, who was stretched out on the floor next to Gary, her forepaws extended, her snout upon the floor. Only her brows twitched as her dark eyes flashed about.

Joyce, in considering what had occurred, with a flash of profound understanding, realized that maybe she did not find Willow. Maybe it was Willow who found her. She noticed the clock on the wall.

"I really have to be going. I'll be sure to give you a call," she said, standing with all the magnificence of an amazon.

"One more thing," Gary said, as she was about to leave. "That envelope on the table next to you with Willow's name on it. Would you get it for me?"

She picked it up, handing it to Gary. But he did not take it.

"That's for you."

She was somewhat reluctant, not knowing how to respond. But the determined look in his unwavering gray eyes conveyed the message. She crammed the envelope into her pocket, with her wallet and keys.

"I'll see you," she said, then turned and left. Willow and Gary followed her to the door.

"It was nice meeting you," he said almost to himself. But she did not hear him, being lost in amazement.

She hurried back the way she had come, feeling good about herself. When she got to the little park where she and Willow had stopped, she took another drink of water. As she had walked pretty fast, she sat for a moment to catch her breath, and the crumpled envelope in her pocket caught her attention.

She pulled it out and looked inside. Had she been struck by lightening she could not have been more shocked. As excruciating as it is was exhilarating, she was overwhelmed by an unmitigated joy.

Her heart raced with delirium, and her breath came in short gasps. Though she did not cry, her vision blurred as her eyes brimmed. The few tears that escaped, glistening as they rolled down her cheeks, fell upon the envelope like drops of rain or holy water, christening three $100 bills.

THE END

The Sting of Reform

from page four

that this form of force and punishment *through increased deprivation is not a solution to women and children in poverty*. I also hope that the creative efforts of those surviving poverty and of those providing services will be fruitful, since we are the ones dealing with this.

These perspectives should be heard both in the resulting programs' implementation and in the knowledge that could be gained in what works and how to change what doesn't.

Allison Woodman is Co-Chair of the Santa Cruz Women's Commission. She has been a single parent on AFDC, a UCSC graduate, and works at the Human Resources Agency of Santa Cruz County. Her article appeared in *The Outrageous Truth,* ed. by Sandy Brown.

Humboldt Bay Evictions

from page four

areas now face, such as dangerous drugs, arms and other black-market trafficking, gangs, prostitution, drug addiction, homicide, robbery, burglary, rape, and domestic violence. This is the "new improved Eureka" being forced upon local citizens and visitors to the area, but at a much higher cost than the $8.5 million corporate welfare subsidy being dished out by State Senator Mike Thompson and U.S. Congressman Frank Riggs, to the logging and tourism industries in their districts.

In the meantime, MAXXAM and other logging interests are destroying old growth redwood forests, while devastating land, air, and water in and around Humboldt Bay with impunity. Anticipated profit from access to a major Eureka port — to export logs and forest products to Japan and other nations — is exorbitant.

Eureka's waterfront development is not only leading to increased homelessness, crime, domestic violence, and other social ills. This claim to fame is promoting increased environmental destruction, and wreaking havoc on the seafood industry.

Tribute to Don Hamilton



Don Hamilton and his first wife, Barbara Marie, in New York in the late 1940s.

"Sometimes I didn't think you could die. You were like Popeye and a genie rolled into one. You were a true defender of the poor and mistreated. You had little but shared generously....
"I remember a time just before Christmas when you bought presents and had children from our old neighborhood bring them to our hidden creekside camp.
"A great fire has burned out. I will try harder to make the world a better place, like you did. I hope your peace will match your struggle here on earth."

— Letter to Don Hamilton from a homeless woman after his death

from page eight

gradually lost its energy and effectiveness as its participants fell away one by one, exhausted by the endless struggle to counterbalance the city's odious attempts to run the homeless out of town or off the streets in the name of progress, tourism, and business.

But Don was one of the few who kept on with the struggle. He founded and announced himself the spokesperson for the Tri-Counties Council of the Unemployed and Homeless — an organization with few members that may have existed mainly in his mind but which nonetheless provided an official platform for his actions. There he'd be — always — at City Council meetings or protest demonstrations or on the solitary vigils he kept outside City Hall, drawing attention to one injustice or another, trying to get the authorities or citizens to right some wrong, or at least to realize that the wrong existed and was wrong.

I've no idea how many times during those years Don was arrested. But it became a common event. Even in his later years when he was largely confined to his wheelchair, you'd often see him being dragged limply off, or suddenly one day there'd come a call from the jail and Don would be on the line asking you to help him with one crisis or another — the jail authorities were denying him medication, or they'd taken his wheelchair away, or someone had crossed one moral line or another and Don needed your aid in combating the new evil.

The truth is you could get pretty tired of this and pretty tired, sometimes, of Don himself, who was often as confrontational with his allies as he was with his antagonists. He had something of a temper and thought nothing of disrupting meetings even when they were conducted by groups of which he was a part; and because he often had his own agendas and moved to his own inner drummer, you'd often find yourself having to argue about strategy or tactics or whatever it was you felt he ought to stop doing in order to make your life easier.

There's no doubt that he was a thorn in many sides and a pain in many asses, but for all of that he spoke truth to power and was always for the underdog and held all people accountable for their actions and would never let pass small injustices or wrongs that people accustomed to power wrongly took for granted. In other words, he kept people straight or at least drew their attention back to injustices that we mistakenly take to be the normal state of things. He made no distinction in this regard between friend and foe and this could obviously become annoying at times — especially for those of us who, as radicals or liberals, assume that our presumed sympathy for others has bought us a pass from opposition. Don would permit no one the forms of self-congratulation or moral smugness to which all of us are at times susceptible.

The manager of the housing complex Don lived in told me about the first meeting he'd had, newly appointed, with the tenants. It was simply a chance for people to get acquainted with him, and alone among the 40 or so tenants Don took exception to things and began to complain that there'd been no advance warning of the meeting, no published agenda, no observation of the rules of order that Don thought should apply to all meetings between those in authority and those they served. In the end, said the manager, "we had Don arrested" — not, as I've said, an uncommon event. Later on, of course, Don and the manager became friends, and they'd sit down and chat, but that first meeting, that was Don in all his excess and unnerving glory, turning things upside down in the name of a theory of justice or equality that only he understood.

And yet, seen in retrospect, from this side of death, none of that matters. In the mute privacy of an inwardness that none of those who knew him ever penetrated or heard explained, Don kept faith with the ideologies, visions and gods who governed his view of the world. If justice required sitting-in, he sat. If it required getting arrested, he got arrested. He was not only there when others were, in solidarity, but he was there when they were not — solitary, if necessary, but there.

I remember in particular the last vigil he kept outside of City Hall only a year ago, after the murder of Linda Archer, a homeless woman. Most people in Santa Barbara let her death pass unnoticed, and the police seemed to quickly lose interest in it. For a solid week Don camped and slept on the sidewalk outside City Hall with a table and tiny shrine set up under a tree, his wheelchair parked off to one side.

No one but the police paid him much attention, appearing every few hours to change the rules about what he could pin to the tree, or where his table could be, or where he was allowed to sit or lie. He got at least half a dozen tickets and was carted off to jail and, when he returned, his permit for the vigil was revoked and he had to fight to get it back again, and there, when the smoke had cleared, was Don again, outside City Hall, trying against the grain of public indifference to remind people about the murdered woman and the dangers faced by street people and what the rest of us owe to those with lives unlike our own.

Of course there was another side to Don that many of us who knew him casually did not see. I talked after Don's death with several men and women who had known him privately, as a friend and benefactor. They spoke of him with reverence — a fact that perhaps should not have surprised me but did. He had helped a lot of people out when they were in trouble, and he had performed an endless series of good deeds unknown to all but their beneficiaries. They were in the main people who had been homeless or otherwise down on their luck: marginal people whose struggles with poverty, affliction, and pain Don wanted to place squarely at the heart of the city's shared moral life.

Don had sheltered them when they had nowhere to go and shared with them whatever he had when they had nothing. Here, for instance, are several lines from a letter a woman friend of his wrote to him after his death:

"Sometimes I didn't think you could die. You were like Popeye and a genie rolled into one. You were a true defender of the poor and mistreated. You had little but shared generously.... I remember a time just before Christmas...when...you bought presents and had children from our old neighborhood bring them to our hidden creekside camp. In the hardest times you were always a friend... You had great humor.... The fun and laughter with you will be some of my happiest memories....A great fire has burned out. I will try harder to make the world a better place, like you did. I hope your peace will match your struggle here on earth."

A few weeks after Don's death, I went over to his small ground-floor apartment to help Maureen sort through his things. Neatly stacked crates were everywhere, filled with books, papers, back copies of the paper Don distributed in coffee houses: *The People's World.* On the living-room walls were tacked a vast collage of posters, announcements, petitions, manifestoes, and mementos of various sorts: six ID bracelets from the VA hospital, for instance, and a single dried leaf — sycamore, I think. And there were photos: photos everywhere, from everywhere, photos of Don with families in the hobo jungle, or with kids at demonstrations, or of groups of homeless or down-and-out men and women; and there were family photos running back to Don's boyhood, and photos of siblings and cousins, and two photos of his estranged sons, and photos of Don too, of course: laughing with buddies in their Merchant Marine uniforms, and with sailors, and I remember especially one strip of passport-sized photos tracing the changes in Don's face from the sweetness of childhood through the lean alertness of young manhood to full adulthood and then on to age and his smiling, pained face.

Standing there, gazing at it all, I could see the arc of his life from beginning to end, and in the silence and emptiness of the house you could not help thinking not so much of Don's life or your own but of all lives, of the odd combinations of tenuous connection and solitude out of which the stuff of human experience is made. You become suddenly aware of the complex depths of human existence, and of the fact that behind each public face there remains a mystery never fully to be understood or accounted for and entirely lost when someone dies.

In the clutter of that shadowy room, I had the feeling I was inside Don's life and could imagine for an instant what it was like to be him. I felt the poignancy of our shared existences and the weight of the solitary loneliness that envelops most marginal men who live and die alone, as Don did, despite their entanglements and friendships. Perhaps with his public life Don created for himself a persona that counterbalanced — ah, but did it at the end? — the solitude that became almost palpable in his rooms.

No doubt he could, by glancing at the walls, review all that had been granted him in life; but it was also, as all such records are, a record of *loss,* of deprivation, of all that time and estrangement and our own errors take from us. What you were reminded of, looking at it, was the odd doubled current of every life, the process by which others come simultaneously towards us and withdraw, offering us joy and stealing it away with a single gesture and in the blink of an eye.

* * * * * * *

Was Don at peace with his life when he died? Did he think the world had been good to him, for all of its faults? I've no idea. On one shelf I found the official history of the Communist Party, annotated in Don's small, careful hand, and on the bed was a coverless Bible, though no one seems to know if Don had read it. Between the two, or in either one, did he find a meaning sufficient to life? It was a full life and a busy one, to judge from the wall, but it must also have been lonely, and Don was never self-revealing enough to let on to others what he himself felt. Did he act and agitate out of a sense of estrangement and deprivation, or out of a sense of plenitude and generosity? Or was it a combination of both? Or does it matter?

Kropotkin somewhere calls all morality "an overflow of vitality." And certainly Don had that, young beyond his years, and with a vitality that saw him into and through age and pain and yet kept him always, despite an infirmity that grew worse with time, engaged in the world in a way that was meant to diminish not his own suffering but that of others.

I didn't stay long in the house. I felt too much like a trespasser. Maureen had told me to take what I wanted, but I had a hard time figuring out if it was right to take anything. I finally settled for Don's history of the Party and a hospital ID bracelet with his photo and a couple of photos from the wall — one of them Don smiling and young. Why did I take them? I'm not sure. I wasn't close enough to Don to want mementos.

But a sort of strange thing had happened to me in the house and I do not know if I can explain it correctly. What happens, you see, is that you work as I have from time to time face to face with people on the margins, and you learn about suffering and courage and then maybe you stop in order to do other things, and then what you know of politics and ideology comes from intellectuals and academics and sophisticated living-room Lenins and tea-time Trotskys and you grow sick of posturing and rhetoric and you end up wondering what the fuss is about or what's left of the left or why you should bother with such bullshit when no one has had a new idea in 50 years.

And then, there you are, as I was, in Don's living-room looking at posters and photos and remembering the human truths and needs and possibilities that are in America wasted and denied, and you remember too your own lost senses of solidarity and community and connection among people who have nothing but courage and hope, and you come back and down to yourself and you think: Oh yeah, this is what it's about.

Maybe I thought if I took an item or two I'd remember, by looking at them, not Don himself so much but all the work that remains to do. Maybe I thought it would somehow keep me straight, just as Don tried for better or worse his whole life to keep others straight: to remind them about what they had forgotten, to make them look at what they did not want to see, to speak

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Legal Places to Sleep

from page six

with all due respect, that while our documents may seem over-simplistic to you, this issue is not complicated. Sleep is a basic human need. Therefore, sleep is also a basic human right. And homeless people who reject institutionalization will not go away. No matter how often they are imprisoned, and no matter how often they are discriminated against, they are, after all, American citizens, long used to the idea that they are Constitutionally free to live as they choose, as long as their living brings no harm to others.

There is no harm in allowing homeless people to have the opportunity for safe and legal camp sites. Whether or not individuals in this population have been forced into homelessness or whether they have chosen to be homeless by their own actions, the condition of homelessness should not be a crime in our city. Indeed, the City of Portland has now before them an opportunity to set precedence in the United States by facing the realities of homelessness in our city and abandoning our criminalization of homeless people for the simple act of sleeping.

After much discussion and soul-searching, members and supporters of the Campaign for Legal Places to Sleep demand that the City of Portland stop arresting homeless people in Portland for sleeping on public, taxpayer-supported property within 30 days of the City Council receiving this letter. By making this statement, we stand solidly with our homeless brothers and sisters and say to you — our city government — that if these unconstitutional arrests do not stop, we will take civil disobedient actions.

This is our constitutional right. Should we deem these actions necessary — particularly in light of recent police actions against peaceful demonstrations in Northeast Portland — we can only hope we will not be fired upon, even with "less-lethal" weapons. We are American citizens protesting an unjust, discriminating, and prejudicial city ordinance. As such, we represent legal feedback to our community and should not be viewed as a threat.

We also respectfully ask that the Portland City Council reply to us in writing within 30 days, regarding the council's conclusions regarding our request for the legalization of camp sites and our request that the city stop the arrest and subsequent criminalization of homeless people for sleeping in public places within our city.

This public letter to the Portland City Council was signed by: Sharon J. Pearson, Daniel Woodham, Kaia Sand, Jason Boycoff, Larry Markovitz, Richard Smith, Bryan Pollard, Ted Doronila, Dina Blair, Bill Brandt, Chip Heinrich, Jill Severson.

Tribute to Don Hamilton

from page 14

for those whose voices no one hears.

I do not think, to tell the truth, that I would have praised Don this fulsomely when he was alive. I often had my own difficulties with him and our politics were not the same and much that he did seemed to me quixotic, arbitrary and, well, yeah, a trifle off the wall. I'd have dismissed him, I'm afraid, largely as something of a crank, or a wonderful eccentric. But that, perhaps, is because I would not have reflected as carefully then as I am doing now, on what he did.

The forgiveness with which we are supposed to view the dead is hinged to something even deeper, which is at work in me now: the reflective understanding, when others die, of the fundamental mystery at the heart of their lives, a mystery that confounds analysis. The answers to certain questions about them lie only with God, or in the blank emptiness into which they pass with death.

We put judgment aside not because God alone can make it, but because we are to realize that none of us can know about others enough to fully determine what moves them, or the complexities behind their choices, or the mix of conscience, need, ego, empathy and yes, let's say it — LOVE, that may lie behind actions that we may never fully understand.

Was Don a good man? How would I know? Suffice it to say that he fought as best he could for the best of causes: the marginal and forgotten and displaced and injured and insulted — all of those we shove aside as a community in our hunger for profits and power and a town so perfect everyone will wrongly believe it a paradise. Don did this without profit or power and obviously at some cost to himself. His sense of justice may not have been the same as yours or mine but it deserves to be honored if only because of what he did in its name. Don never put aside his beliefs or made them secondary to his own welfare. Given his physical condition, the vigils he kept and the time he spent in jail may well have shortened his life, but though he often railed — quite rightly — at the treatment he got in jail, he never, not once, let his own condition affect the moral and political decisions he made.

That's heroic, when you come right down to it. And what matter, then, if Don would sometimes get in your face? We must remember that Gandhi was irascible and Tolstoy was a monster and Martin Luther King argued loudly with one of the two illicit lovers he reportedly saw the last night of his life. Don was perhaps not in their league but he partook of the great reservoir of human generosity and solidarity from which they drew their goodness and strength, despite their human flaws. And if he sometimes seemed to look for excuses to protest, or if some times a bit of ego and self-definition got bound up with what he did, well, hell, welcome to the real world. That was no different for him than it is for the rest of us for whom politics and maybe even morality is in part a way of announcing ourselves to the world.

Don, in the end, was akin in his own way to the southern activists and protesters who spoke with their flesh in a kind of lived "body language" more eloquent than any speech and simply sat or stood where the law said they could not until the law was changed. And he was related, too, to the solitary figure all of us saw in Tiananmen Square asserting in solitude the timeless vulnerability of human flesh against the passing powers of the army and the state. That, literally — as annoying as he sometimes got, and as easy as it is to forget it — is what Don was doing. It is what he brought and gave to this town, and it seems to me now, in the wake of his death, a great gift.

When the problems surrounding Don's corpse are sorted out, it will be shipped up here to Santa Barbara and Don will be cremated. Then his friends will have a small ceremony to honor him. The original plan was to scatter the ashes into the sea, because Don was a seaman. But maybe, too, we should take at least a handful of ashes and scatter them outside City Hall, at the foot of the tree under which Don held his vigils. I believe there are laws against that, and if things turn out as they usually do, maybe a cop will come along and be tempted to arrest someone.

What more fitting end or tribute could there be for Don? One last memorial confrontation and bust. It seems only right. Cry freedom, for a moment, for Don.

Isla Vista Banishment

from page one

number of violent confrontations, they decided that three citations for violent or publicly drunken behavior in the parks would lead to a ban from the parks, and that violation of this ban could be punished, in turn, with up to a year in jail — a sentence far more stringent, of course, than the few days in jail with which public drunkenness is punished.

What is more — and what is far worse — is that if you are cited five times for "infractions" such as illegal camping in the parks, then you too can be banned for life, and the violation of this ban can also lead to a year in jail.

But look at what is happening here. A law originally devised in desperation to deal with violent behavior has been adapted to deal with behavior that is neither violent nor any kind of danger to public order. And this shift, from a last-ditch stratagem for dealing with violence to a tactic meant only to harass the homeless and drive them from our midst, is a major and a dangerous one — and one that must not pass unnoticed or un-protested.

Let me point out several things:

1) We all must understand that normally, on any given evening, there are not nearly enough available beds to shelter the homeless inside. They must sleep outside.

2) They are forbidden to sleep on both private and public property, and therefore almost anywhere they sleep or "camp" is illegal.

3) The law defines "camping" as putting anything — a blanket, a piece of cardboard — between yourself and the earth, and it also forbids sheltering yourself in any way from the elements, which is absolutely necessary in bad weather, whatever the law says.

4) For safety's sake — remember the homeless woman, recently murdered — the homeless sometimes prefer to camp in places that are relatively safe — parks, for instance, where there are others close by, or where violence is less likely to occur than in deserted or unseen stretches of unmanaged land.

5) In itself, sleeping or camping harms no one. They do not disrupt public order or put others in danger.

Are these laws, then, really the best approach to peaceful homeless behavior? Do we want to treat innocent behavior in the same way that we treat violence? Do we want to equate it with bullying behavior? Is it moral to do that? Is it legally sound? Is it appropriate in terms of the needs and suffering of nonviolent citizens down on their luck? If we have failed as a community to provide shelter to the homeless, can we legitimately punish them for sheltering themselves?

Indeed, the proper action for civic authorities, given the absence of shelter beds and the refusal of the city or county to open a year-round shelter, ought to be a suspension of existing camping and sleeping ordinances. When, several years ago, those laws were in fact suspended nothing terrible happened: crime did not rise; the city was not overrun with vagrants; no drop in tourism or housing values was noted; we simply became a slightly kinder and gentler municipality and the rest of the world went on its merry and profitable way without problems.

If we are made nervous by unmonitored or uncontrolled sleeping in parks, then why not set up monitored sites where policemen swing by regularly and people can shelter themselves in relative safety and peace? Are we too mean, too morally stupid, too uncaring, to even *try* that? Out here on the streets there are mainly decent men and women who mean no harm to others; and if there are also some who grow violent or get drunk, well let us find appropriate ways to deal with them; but why pick on the others, who need our help or at least our benevolent indifference rather than punitive zeal?

Just a few days ago, the *Santa Barbara News-Press* ran an editorial celebrating the notion of a "Museum of Tolerance" to be established in the city. No doubt all of us would bemoan and protest any attempt to do here what was done to the Jews and the Gypsies and the homosexuals and the Communists in Germany. But how different in reality is our persecution of the homeless from the early laws in Germany pertaining to those denied full citizenship and human sympathy? *Tolerance* doesn't mean only remembering the past injuries done by others; it means recognizing the injuries we now do to those among us. Want to know how things worsened in Germany? Listen, then, to the silence of citizens as bad law is made here in town.

In the end, what makes a town beautiful are not the red roofs and white walls we require of builders. It is not the tourist hotels or pretty malls; it is the moral quality of its laws and the justice of its citizens and magistrates; it is the quality of the "social contract" extended to all, even the neediest citizens. In those terms, Santa Barbara gets uglier every day.

What happens to the homeless is done by us all.

Oakland Tenants Union

from page two

is still only a dream. Although the OTU has a diverse membership, including homeless and low-income people and all the way up to renters in luxury apartments, their numbers are few. Organizing is difficult because tenants are hard to reach.

Many people live in large apartment buildings which often are secured so OTU representatives can't get in to distribute leaflets unless they have members on the inside. Vann estimates that about 40% of tenants live in these large apartment buildings and another 20% live in smaller buildings of three to six units. These are the renters who are most subject to abuse, often by absentee landlords. Those who live in one and two-family dwellings are likely to have a closer relationship with their landlords and not to have the same kinds of problems.

A large potential membership obviously is out there. Besides the apartment dwellers who can expect regular rent increases, there are those who are actually being evicted so their landlords can raise rents to exorbitant levels. It is not possible to get accurate figures on how many people are being evicted and for what reasons, but it is estimated that there are 7,000 to 8,000 evictions in Oakland every year. That means 15,000 to 20,000 people are put out of their homes each year! They too are candidates to join the OTU in the fight for justice for tenants.

Right now the OTU is working to recruit members. The plan for the future is to hold a citywide tenants' convention to determine what the tenants' concerns are and then organize actions around those issues. They might decide to work on getting a real rent control measure on the ballot. Also, there are suggestions that OTU compile a report rating landlords on how fairly they treat their tenants. Another proposed project is to examine court records of evictions. Finally, the organization might put pressure on the politicians to create more affordable housing.

Whatever the OTU does will be decided by the members. Shoup emphasizes that "this is a step-by-step process. We don't want to get ahead of ourselves; we have to have rank-and-file support. That's what we're building for."

Bulldozers at Beach Flats



Santa Cruz plans to demolish perfectly habitable Beach Flats homes like this to make way for a new roller coaster at the Boardwalk. Jane Baer photo

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expand, adding a 125-feet roller coaster at the mouth of the San Lorenzo River and mowing down some of the best housing stock in the Beach Flats in the process.

An additional $5 million has been proposed to renovate and expand the La Bahia hotel, owned by the Seaside Company, from 42 rooms to a 275-room hotel and conference center. The recipient of this fat giveaway is Charles Canfield, CEO and majority stockholder of the Seaside Company, and Santa Cruz's richest resident.

"It's a swindle and a giveaway," charges Phil Baer, longtime Beach Flats landlord and resident (a rare combo in the Beach Flats), and member of the Beach Flats Neighborhood Association (BFNA). Since Beach Flats has the last truly affordable housing in the city, activists are preparing to fight for replacement housing, and to monitor illegal evictions by landlords trying to avoid payment of large relocation costs.

City officials have made plenty of promises but no guarantees of replacement housing for the 162 units of housing which will be lost when all phases of the plan are enacted. Similarly, there are no guarantees of revenue from the hoped-for increased tourist traffic.

The one housing project currently being considered by Mercy Charities, a 28-unit proposal, lacks sufficient financing to proceed. If built, it will have such a narrow criteria for occupancy that no one due to be displaced by the first phase of development will qualify for residency there.

"The Mello Act is not being adhered to," charged Beach Flats resident Roxanne Acquistapace. "This act requires the replacement housing to be of equal value to the housing vacated. So an apartment would not be an acceptable replacement for a single family home."

No currently housed renter or homeowner living in a single-family residential home would choose to trade a house and a yard for a tiny apartment in a housing project, even if they qualify. The targeted homes, built between 1904 and 1920, include seven historic homes, and would all be demolished to expand the Boardwalk.

The neighborhood would be reduced by one-third, and the resident density would actually increase under the plan. This is especially ironic because one of the reasons given for the need to "do something" in Beach Flats neighborhood is to relieve overcrowding.

Slum housing or slick rhetoric ?

Claims of substandard or below-code housing units in Beach Flats appear to be myths. Santa Cruz City Councilmember Mike Rotkin called the Beach Flats housing "a slum" and "an eyesore," infuriating residents who have experienced the neglect of City officials for over 10 years in maintaining the streets or fixing inadequate storm drains.

Acquistapace refutes Rotkin's claim that the housing is substandard. "For the past two years our neighborhood has been scrutinized by city code inspectors with clipboards walking our streets all day and every day looking for violations to cite," Acquistapace reports. "No other neighborhood in the city has had to put up with such scrutiny. There are no substandard units of housing in Beach Flats." All 344 units of housing in the Beach Flats neighborhood have been inspected inside and out in the last six years.

Frustrated with efforts to empty housing units through existing code violations quickly enough to make way for the commercial development, the Planning Commission, at its May 12th session, explored asking the City Council to write an ordinance making standards in the Beach Flats neighborhood more stringent than the State or Federal Housing and Safety Codes. The commissioners discussed talking to judges ahead of time to encourage them to strictly enforce the Beach Flats' cases and "educating" sympathetic magistrates to rule on these cases, in order to guarantee a favorable judgment.

Local residents opposing the Seaside scheme for their neighborhood have reported being pressured by Santa Cruz City Councilmembers.

"(Councilmembers) Kennedy, Rotkin, and Hernandez have been following our members around as they have been going door to door with our literature," said Beach Flats resident Acquistapace. "They have been acting in a very intimidating manner." BFNA members reported that police officers knocked on area residents' doors demanding to know if they had received any literature from opponents of the redevelopment plan.

Even former Mayor Jane Yokoyama, at the first large predominantly Spanish-language meeting in Beach Flats on August 19, told the group that those three councilmembers had been lying when they said they had gone door to door and most of the Beach Flats residents were in favor of the plan. *"No es verdad,"* she told the group.

Canfield — the speculator

Over the past six years, Charles Canfield has been buying up housing in the Beach area. Many contend the Canfield properties are among the worst maintained. "Engineered blight!" charges Phil Baer, noting that it allows Canfield to buy up properties at depressed values. Canfield admitted he could raise the rents without making any improvements with impunity.

This tactic has resulted in families leaving the Beach Flats because of the ever-increasing rents, leaving the units vacant, and relieving Canfield from having to pay costly relocation costs. A unit left empty for two years relieves the obligation for the developer to replace the unit.

In 1997, records show that Canfield had bought or owned 54 parcels in the Beach Flats. Many have already been bulldozed. The Beach Flats Neighborhood Association reports that 25 to 30 Canfield properties stand vacant today, including one unit standing empty and boarded up since the 1989 earthquake. In a neighborhood reported to have the highest percentage of Latinos in the city, this has already resulted in the dislocation of 200-300 mostly poor or low-income people.

Lousy pay for Seaside workers

The final irony: Seaside Company employees don't earn enough to pay for Seaside Company housing. According to a Santa Cruz Homeowners & Residents Committee report, of the 975 current Seaside Company employees, only 75 work year round. Starting wages are $6.15 per hour with no benefits. Expected jobs from the B/SOL Plan are those of amusement park ride operators, wait persons, hotel maids, and retail clerks — none of which will be living wage positions.

The Seaside Company has a reputation for running homeless people off the Santa Cruz Boardwalk through the use of very aggressive security guards. Homeless United for Friendship and Freedom (HUFF) has received several complaints of unnecessary force, discriminatory evictions, and property seizures from the amusement park, which is advertised as having free admission.

On August 5, the Planning Commission ignored overwhelming opposition from Beach Flats residents to approve the redevelopment plan, with a few minor modifications from Commissioner Rod Quartararo, a right-wing City Council candidate voting for the plan. In addition to Linda Steinau and Quartararo, candidate Jane Walton also favors the plan. She described the housing units in the path of the 3rd Street realignment as "rat holes," but admitted she didn't know of a single unit of occupied below-code housing.

Eight former Mayors announce opposition to expansion plan

On September 11, six former Santa Cruz mayors presented Mayor Celia Scott with a letter opposing the B/SOL Plan. Mardi Wormhoudt organized the mayoral opponents, and she was joined by former mayors John Laird, Burt Muhly, Bruce Van Allen, Jane Weed, and Jane Yokoyama. Former mayors Lorette Woods and Sally Di Girolamo also signed.

City Council candidates Sugar, Krohn, Fitzmaurice, and Clark are all against the plan, and, if they win all three seats in the November 3rd election, could overturn the plan by joining Katherine Beiers, who is already seated. Mayor Scott, who is expected to vote against the plan on October 6, is leaving the council.

But five votes on the current City Council will assure the plan is a done deal. Those five votes sold out the Pelton Street homeless garden program and voted for the Gateway Shopping Center — which displaced Food Not Bombs and the Organic Community Garden and destroyed housing and historical buildings. Joined by pro-development Cynthia Matthews and the eternally dim-witted Mary Beth Campbell, five votes are in the bag.

Santa Cruz taxpayers must pay for yet another big case of corporate welfare to a company that receives 3.2 million visitors per year, but only pays $1,301,600 in revenue to the City now, and has NO UNIONIZED LABOR!

Beach Flats residents lose one-third of their neighborhood and gain diminished-quality, token replacement housing for which few who are displaced will qualify. The homeless will have no chance to find affordable housing or living wage jobs in Beach Flats — but the richest man in the city of Santa Cruz will be a lot richer.

For more information:
Beach Area Working Group: 831/458-3434
Beach Flats Neighborhood Association: 831/423-0170
Santa Cruz Homeowners & Residents Committee: 831/429-6016
To arrange a walking tour of Beach Flats call: 831/426-3026 or 423-0170
To contact the author: e-mail to Wmnofstl@cruzio.com

Economic Bill of Rights

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al regulations ensuring fair labor practices, environmental sustainability and worker/consumer health and safety.

Only with an Economic Bill of Rights will Americans be able to realize the rights to equality, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness promised in the Declaration of Independence.

The Right reaps the whirlwind

The next recession is coming closer at a time of global economic turmoil. The Right is ready to reap the whirlwind of the next recession — and the millennium. Add to the millennial climate the rising fears of terrorism, the real and imagined consequences of the computer "millennium bug," the destructive, chaotic effects of global warming that some will attribute to godly wrath, and the year 2000 election.

People will be seeking hope and the promise of change. The Right draws strength from appearing far stronger than the sum of its individual parts. Its ability to come together around common agendas and its sustained, skillful projection through the media are key reasons why. Progressives, on the other hand, are weaker than the sum of our many inspiring, life-saving individual parts.

We need to get our parts together. An Economic Bill of Rights gives us a sustainable framework for shared vision, shared values, and shared policies.

Living wage campaigns have a strong and growing track record around the country. They clearly inspire people and bring people together. We should build on this momentum. At the same time, people are acting on their disgust with legalized political bribery by supporting Clean Money campaigns.

An Economic Bill of Rights should inspire people, not be a laundry list of every progressive demand. In the words of the Heritage Foundation's Policy Review: "The easy part is getting your message right. The real test is getting your message out."

Progressives typically devote great amounts of time and resources to getting the message right, and relatively little to getting the message out. Progressives must re-inspire our base and engage the millions of Americans who may never have heard of us or our programs. We have to reach them in person, in print, on radio and TV, and in cyberspace.

Let's use the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration to promote an Economic Bill of Rights and build the critical mass we need to change our country for the better.

Holly Sklar is the author of *Chaos or Community? Seeking Solutions, Not Scapegoats for Bad Economics* and *Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood* (South End Press).

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